

JUSOOR

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5/6

CULTURE & HEGEMONY

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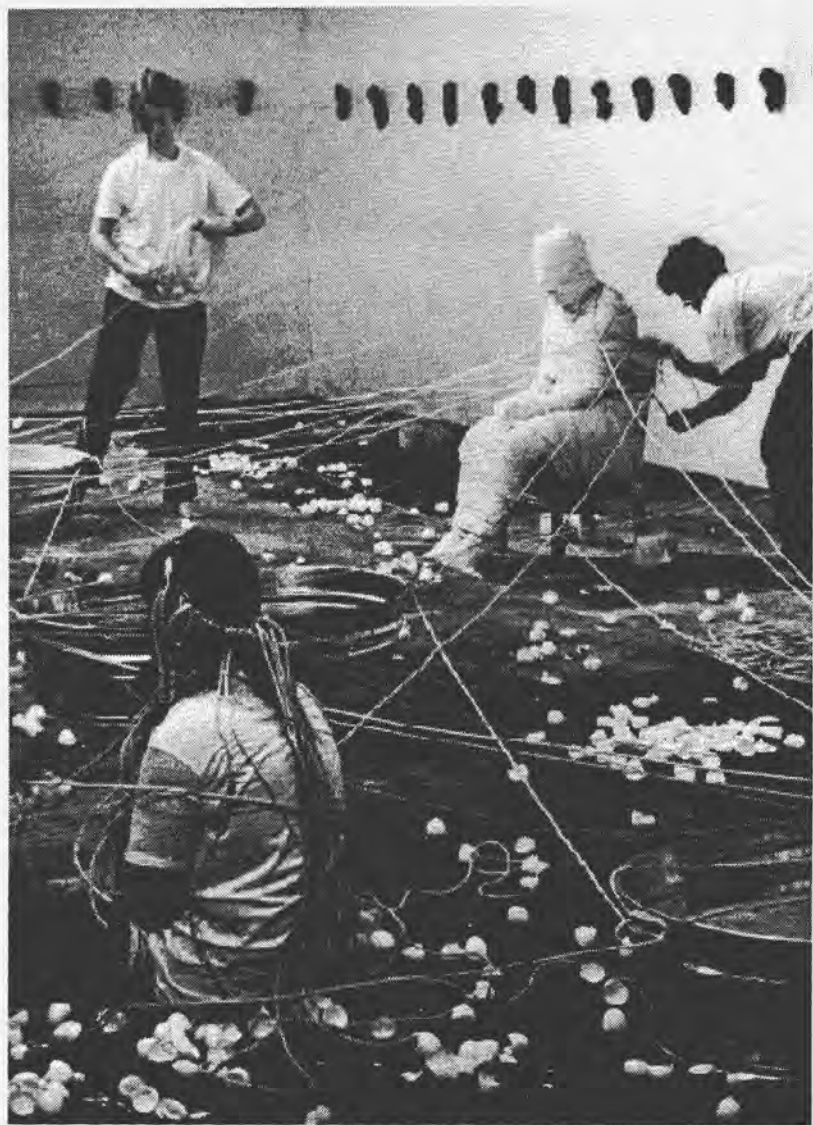
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"Before Their Diaspora"

"They made us
many promises, more than
I can remember, but they never kept but one;
they promised to take our land,
and they took it"
Red Cloud

CULTURE AND HEGEMONY



SO HELPLESS

"A woman was tied into a chair and then tied to everything else in the vast room... after being 'bathed' in raw eggs, earth, blood. The sound was a tape recording of women telling about their rapes. At the end of the piece the last voice repeated over and over, 'I felt so helpless all I could do was lie there and cry.'"

(Ablutions, The Feminist Art Program, Venice, California, 1972)

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Introduction



FUNDAMENTALIST OR SAINT?

In recent speeches first to the Jordanian Parliament and then to the Israeli Knesset, President Clinton let the official mask of state drop once and for all. To the Israelis he said, promising solidarity: *God is on our side!* To the Arabs he said, with the condescension of a victor: *Congratulations on your surrender!*

It happened late last year, when the President traveled to the Middle East to "further the peace process." On October 26, he spoke to the Jordanian Parliament: *"You made a bold choice: You rejected the dark forces of terror and extremism; you embraced the bright promise of tolerance and moderation. You spurned those who would draw you back into the hostile past. You chose instead a future of opportunity and tranquility for your children."*

On October 27 he spoke to the members of the Israeli Knesset: *"... the only time my wife and I ever came to Israel before today was 13 years ago with my pastor on a religious mission... We visited the holy sites. I relived the history of the Bible, of your Scriptures and mine. And I formed a bond with my pastor. Later, when he became desperately ill, he said I thought I might one day become President. And he said, more bluntly than the Prime Minister did, 'If you abandon Israel, God will never forgive you.' (Applause) He said it is God's will that Israel, the biblical home of the people of Israel, continue*

forever and ever. (Applause) So I say to you, tonight, my friends, one of our Presidents, John Kennedy, reminded us that here on Earth, God's will must truly be our own."

Clinton offered these blessed prayers both for the return of God's will to the Jerusalem of Israel and to an America that existed before the creation of the American Constitution. They run counter to the usual language of former administrations which employed politically camouflaged terms such as "strategic alliance" for "*holy alliance*," "common values" for "*common faith*" and "moral commitment" for "*religious fanaticism*". In being so straightforward, as the prime leader of the United States, in both his bias and his source of support -- *The Will of God* -- President Clinton seems to have cheerfully participated in a flagrant violation of the American Constitution.

The true philosophy of his thinking on the Palestinian tragedy shows the influence of Church and Old Testament concepts on his Administration's policy, and the particularly Maccabian colonialist meaning of the "peace" he wants to achieve. His heartfelt words dramatically demonstrated that the President no longer feels any need to present his policies behind the usual hypocritical veils of fairness and balance, since the "Ovid Arabs" (Ovid being the Roman author of the *Metamorphoses*, in which creatures are in flux and change bodily form) and the entire, constantly metamorphosing Arab world, are presently bankrupt, humiliated and of no account whatsoever. But his statements also indicate that during his term of office the American Revolution has become bankrupt as well, with nothing more to say to Arabs in general, and to Palestinians in particular. The Founding Fathers of the Democratic United States would be appalled.

Clinton persistently likens America, the country of refuge, hope and extreme diversity of races and beliefs, the country of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, to Israel, where officially sanctioned "Chromosome Laboratories" have yet to decide who is a Jew. Clinton's America eerily recalls "*New*

India" whose early colonists arrived on board the "*Old Testament*," armed with the "*will of God*" to annihilate the Goyim (Gentiles) of the New World. As Max Dimont points out in *The Indestructible Jews* : " These Puritans regarded themselves, and were known in England, as "*Hebraists*"... [They] took the Old Testament as their model of government... [and, once in America, they] modelled their new homeland upon Old Testament principles... The Puritans were highly influenced by the Old Testament concepts of a people chosen by the biblical God to exert His will and especially, to lead the rest of the world..."

Hebrew and Latin, not English, were the basic teaching languages at Harvard when it was established in 1636. John Cotton (1584-1652), a powerful head of the Puritan Church in Boston, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wanted to adopt the Mosaic code as official state law, along with Hebrew as the official language, for Massachusetts Bay as well as the rest of the thirteen "blue blood" colonies on the Atlantic seaboard. When "God's children" began pushing westward, the ethnic cleansing of the native population was only a manifestation of the "Will of God" hauntingly invoked again by Clinton in his speech to the Knesset.

A strong strain of Maccabian Hebraism worked its way into the beliefs of American Fundamentalism despite the American Revolution and the European Spirit of Enlightenment that was adopted by the Founding Fathers of this nation. In fact, the Founding Fathers intended to save America from Fundamentalism in their criticism of the creed of the colonial Hebraists. All of their writings and works express utter disdain of the commandments of the clergy and proclaim in very clear terms their fear of clerical collusion with the state against peoples' freedoms. The First Amendment is the Constitution's safeguard against the influence of the clergy and the danger of control imposed on American politics by "*the Will of God*" always subject to interpretation, and too often by a theologically supported fundamentalism with vested interests.

The concept of the *Chosen People of God* and *Divine Predestination*, according to the International Investigation Committee of the Racist System in South Africa, is responsible for the justification of colonial expression which led to the great massacres committed following the recognition of the white man's immigration both to north America and Africa, equivalent to that of the Israelites vis-à-vis the Promised Land. The Old Testament definition of "*The Will of God*" often manifests a bracing bloodthirstiness: By the will of God: "*I will use you to break nations into pieces*" (Jeremiah 51:20) ; By the will of God: "*Drink blood until you drunk*" (Ezekiel 39:19); By the will of God: "*I will give the dead bodies of the Philistines to the birds and wild animals!*" (1 Samuel 17:45)

"By the will of God," echoed again by President Clinton, occupation becomes an act of glorification of God, and breaking children's bones becomes an act of heroism. Is it not the right of those who observe this heavenly carnival of violence to ask: "Is there no referee to tell us who is the Saint and who is the Fundamentalist? Who is the God of occupation, and who is the God of freedom? Why don't we listen to what the God of Palestinian Christian who is crucified every day on the cross of Judeo-Christian civilization has to say?"

All fundamentalisms are dangerous to our minds, talents, souls, faiths and the productivity of our humanness. As Roger Garaudy points out in *Intégrismes*: "The concept of fundamentalism includes every movement, religious or political, that claims to be the sole possessor of the complete, final and absolute truth, such as the truth about the divine selection... This applies equally to fundamentalists of Nazism, Stalinistic Communism, technocracy, Christianity and Islam, as well as the fundamentalists of Israeli colonialistic policy."

In America, we have a state that owns enough weapons of mass destruction to kill the population of 17 planets the size of earth, and a policy and ideology which are basically being inspired by "Market Morals" which do not acknowledge *The Other*, but consider every *Other* a worthy candidate for

sacrifice. Under the patronage of "Market Morals" and the super colonial hegemonies, there is a need to forge entirely new peoples and cultures, to recreate or refabricate *the Other* into what is socially, economically and racially acceptable to the most powerful, who are also, of course, carrying out "*The Will of God.*"

In his address to the Knesset, Mr. Clinton doesn't try to hide the common heritage he shares with Rabin and Sharon and Kahane, and which simultaneously cuts him off from the heritage of the American Revolution. With his well-considered words, he confesses that foreign policy is an expression of the Will of God, a policy of absolute commitment toward the fulfillment of the destiny of peoples and nations as written in the Old Testament. So what kind of peace would a fundamentalist desire, possessed as he is by "Market Morals" and the apocalyptic ideology of hatred? What remains is simply the *noblesse oblige* of occupation and hegemony, and demonizing of *the Other* as an enemy of peace (and a fundamentalist enemy at that) only worthy of being eradicated. By itself, this brand of fundamentalism, repugnant as it is, might be considered normal for human nature, backed by stockpiles of the most destructive forces on the face of the earth, it becomes a threat to humanity.

In Clinton's address to these two nations, we see how direct occupation which is supported by "*the will of God*" cannot go back to the status it had during past decades except through a process of what we might call "Carthaginian Peace." Peace in Carthage did not become established when Rome annihilated Carthage, but rather when the Carthaginians themselves, those who escaped annihilation, began to say about Carthage's destruction what the Romans themselves were saying. In the same way, the "Trojan Peace" did not come into being when the Greeks obliterated Troy from the face of the earth, but when the Trojan themselves started to enjoy Homer! The extermination of the "*awareness of resistance*" of the people was done in a much more through manner than the horrifically bloody

extermination of the people themselves. Then Roman culture was free to falsify Carthage's proud history in much the same way that the Americans have eradicated the history of Hiroshima.

The French critic, Tzvetan Todorov, records Las Casas, the historian of the Columbian Conquest, writing in his will: "I believe that because of these impious, criminal and ignominious deeds perpetrated so unjustly, tyrannically and barbarously, God will vent upon Spain His wrath and His fury, for nearly all of Spain has shared in the bloody wealth usurped at the cost of so much ruin and slaughter."

Barbarous tyrannies receive their due in divine measure. No amount of injustice prevails forever without its consequences returning its perpetrators. It seems to be God's will.

Jusoor

(This English translation is edited by Daniel Moore)

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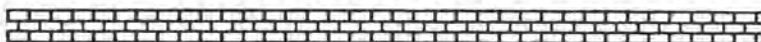
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for their courteous cooperation and assistance.



Settlers and soldiers; one policy under God

George Azar



**THE "PEACE PROCESS" AS
A NEGOTIATING STRATEGY**
**THE ESSENCE AND THE DERIVATIVES:
REVERSING THE ORDER**

The Madrid process has already yielded to Israel important benefits—full peace with Jordan and a serious embarkation on the road to peace with Syria. The separate tracks approach, devised by Israel and sold to the Arabs by James Baker III, has enabled Israel to accomplish a broad strategic goal: a separate peace with the Arab states not contingent on the necessity of meeting Israeli obligations to the Palestinian people as spelled out in various U.N. resolutions. Thus the withdrawal clause of Security Council resolution 242 was an issue between Israel and Jordan regarding a little known patch of desert in southern Jordan, and an issue between Israel and Syria regarding the Golan Heights, but not in the West Bank and Gaza, and certainly not in Jerusalem, which Israel does not consider as occupied.

The second diplomatic instrument of Madrid (negotiations in stages), also conceived by Israel and brokered by Baker, has enabled Israel to accomplish another strategic goal: deferral of the Palestine question in its entirety while normalizing relations with the Arab World and reorganizing its occupation of Palestinian lands, with Yasser Arafat's full complicity and active cooperation. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority has emerged as the instrument to help effect that reorganization and

to simultaneously pre-empt and marginalize the PLO, as the anchor of Palestinian national rights.

Rarely are nations able to achieve so much in negotiations while making negligible concessions in return. Israeli diplomats and businessmen shuttle freely between Arab capitals, all the way from Qatar in the east to Casablanca in the west. The Arab boycott of Israel is effectively none-existent. The concept of Arab defense has been rendered a subversive phenomenon by the Israel-Jordan peace treaty. Israel is planning its own NAFTA throughout the Arab World, and the list goes on.

Clearly, this growing normalization has sidelined the Palestinian track. Arafat's apologists blame the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War for the Palestinian travail, but rarely, if at all, do they accept responsibility for their own mistakes or acknowledge having been fooled into a no-win strategy. Nor is there any awareness by Arafat himself and by his top echelons that they don't even have a negotiating strategy when Israel's diplomatic resources and legal talents have been fully mobilized since Madrid.

Global and regional considerations aside, however, Arafat cannot escape responsibility for having exchanged the Madrid framework, in which autonomy was deemed as the beginning of a transitional phase, for the Oslo framework, which effectively makes autonomy the end of the road, at best. Nor could he be exempted from the responsibility for having released Syria and Jordan from their obligations towards the Palestine question, despite the two tracks. For despite the obvious short comings of the Madrid framework, it still contained some safeguards against Palestinian isolation from the Arab parties. Baker's eight trips to the Middle East prior to Madrid had testified to the controlling nature of the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its central role in the diplomatic process.

Having opted for the Oslo *venue* instead of Washington, Arafat was able to negotiate without a proxy. But while he ceased to be a pariah himself, together with his organization, he

managed to place the entire Palestine question under probation . And together with the bureaucrats of his organization, he was tempted by an imaginary prospect of international donations and a place that he can call home, even if it was Gaza. Having sensed Arafat's economic and psychological needs, the Israelis offered him what they largely conceived as a "good riddance." It was a good deal: He assumed their burden and paid a price too.

The diplomatic instruments of Madrid, which Arafat failed to employ, have been utilized by Israel to lure the Palestinians into a blind alley, put them on hold, while at the same time using them as the green light for entry into Amman and Damascus. The penetration of Amman and the approach towards Damascus are being achieved with virtually no cost to Israel, since the Palestinians are stuck in Gaza trying to qualify as guardians for the occupation, leaving the nexus of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the "final stage". While placing the nexus on hold, Israel is strategically positioned, for the first time, to address the derivatives: the Jordanian and Syrian issues, which can be reduced to technical items-borders to be adjusted, water to be redistributed, security to be arranged and armies to be reconfigured and redeployed.

This is not to say that Israel's conflict with the Palestinians is not about borders security and water. It is about all these issues; but above all, it is about a right to exist, which the Palestinians had non-reciprocally conceded to Israel. Israel's non-recognition of the Palestinians as a sovereign people is the single most important obstacle to a genuine peace. Having acquiesced in that denial, the Palestinians have effectively enabled Israel to give the derivatives of the Arab-Israeli conflict precedence over the essence of the conflict. Israel continues to orchestrate Middle East diplomacy in such a way as to subordinate the nexus to the derivatives and reap tremendous benefits in the process.

It is in this context that Israel's negotiating strategy becomes crystal clear: the Gaza-Jericho First formula is the bait, which

facilitated the entire diplomatic flow in the region. Ironically, for Israel, it opened the gateway to the Arab World, but it simultaneously left the doors to the West Bank tightly closed in the face of the Palestinians. Instead of being the saviour of Arafat's career, it served as his trap. Unlike Sadat, who concluded a single agreement with Israel to be implemented in stages, Arafat had merely concluded an agreement to reach agreement, which would be negotiated in stages. His path to the West Bank will, therefore, be arduous, and the road to Jerusalem is likely to be closed. It is the logical result of Israel's strategy and Arafat's ad hoc or non-strategy. Dreaming about final status talks while paying little attention to the interim phase has taken a heavy toll on the Palestinians. Gaza has become their purgatory while heaven in the West Bank is a long way off. And for the diaspora Palestinians there is neither purgatory nor the awaited heaven-only hell. This has been mandated by negotiations in stages, on separate tracks, in which Israel's legal and diplomatic skills were deployed against Arafat's instant diplomats, who must struggle through the language, ponder the nuances, and contend with what they surely perceive as inscrutable and excessive legalism.

RE-DEPLOYMENT RE-CONSIDERED

Israel has thus far succeeded in setting the agenda for the negotiations. By determining the framework and the scope of the "peace process", Israel was able to keep the course of diplomacy consonant with its national goals and acceptable to its various constituencies, including important segments of the right-wing opposition and the expansionist settler movement. Thus, while the Gaza-Jericho agreement enjoys a broad consensus in the Israeli body politic, a replication of it in the West Bank would be out of the question, in both the short and medium ranges, given the expected opposition by the 310,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and "greater Jerusalem", and by their numerous supporters inside Israel.

Rabin's government is deeply aware of the fact that the

redeployment of the Israeli Army to the 15 Gaza Strip settlements was much more feasible, in political and security terms, than a redeployment in the West Bank. And yet, according to a May 1994 report of the Gaza Center For Rights and Law, an estimated 4000-4500 Israeli soldiers are assigned to 54 settlements, camps, and checkpoints. Given that, one wonders how many soldiers and how many years would be required to assure the security of Israeli installations in the West Bank. The demographic and geographic character of the 140 Jewish settlements in the West Bank would make it nearly impossible for any Israeli government to extend limited self-rule from Gaza to the West Bank. As long as the Zionist ideology of acquiring the land without the people prevails, a negotiated settlement based on the right of the two peoples to dignity and self-determination will continue to be illusive. Thus the Gaza-Jericho agreement, itself, was part of Israel's negotiating strategy calculated to put the onus on Arafat to prove his ability to govern Gaza before he is allowed to govern the West Bank, while Israel is released of the pressure for a solution of its continuing occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem. And as long as Hamas and Islamic Jihad persist in launching attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians, Arafat's obligation to Israeli security under the Cairo agreement will continue to dominate the diplomatic agenda and dwarf the issue of extending self-rule to the West Bank.

Palestinian obligations for Israeli security under the Cairo agreement are now being reinterrupted to include the security of the settlements. Thus, by December 1994, Rabin's government made it clear to the Palestinian negotiators that the redeployment clause in the Cairo agreement is an obstacle to the continuation of their talks. As the Likud and the settler movement threaten to make the "settlements security" a campaign issue in 1996, Rabin and his Meretz allies, who previously endorsed a two state solution, now favor amending the Oslo accords so that Palestinian elections in the West Bank would not have to be preceded by Israeli redeployment.

Emphasizing Israel's "rethinking" of the Oslo terms, Minister Yossi Sarid of Meretz told the *Jerusalem Post* (November 15, 1994) that the Palestinians "have no choice. If they do not understand now, they will eventually understand." Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher dutifully added: "No one expects Israel to redeploy outside the territories during the second stage of the interim agreement, unless the PLO assures security in the area under its control." The onus has thus been clearly placed on the Palestinians by the "honest broker," who seems to modify his own rules to suit the exigencies of not only U.S. domestic politics but also of Israeli domestic politics. Palestinian domestic considerations, on the other hand, are not even an issue for Christopher, since the only real opposition to Arafat's policies is coming from the religious bloc, which is being dismissed as a law and order issue rather than political opposition. With the Gaza-Jericho project under way, the effective dynamics of Palestinian politics have become almost exclusively external. Arafat's legitimacy is now derived from Israel and the United States.

Thus, the presently-declared position of Israel and of the peace sponsor marks yet a new and ominous departure from the rules, which used to govern the Palestine question: The framework for a solution had descended from the U.N. resolutions to the Madrid assurances, to Oslo and Cairo with their two tracks and two stages, and now to the point when the concept of two stages is itself rendered superfluous. Israel's security and Palestinian rights were the concomitant principles of Madrid. Now settlement security is a condition for the pursuit of the "peace process." Thus the settlements, which the U.S. had once considered as illegal (under Carter), which then became an "obstacle to peace," under Bush and Baker, reduced to a "complicating factor" in the negotiations during the initial period of Clinton's presidency, are now being elevated to a security issue, the assurance of which is a prerequisite for the extension of the peace talks. Given that, how can the Palestinians argue with some credibility, during the so-called

final status talks, that these settlements exist illegally on occupied land and must, therefore, be dismantled? Having accepted the paramouncy of their security now, could they reasonably expect their destruction in 1996? Israeli strategy has simply succeeded in altering the diplomatic framework from international legality, manifested in U.N. resolution, to colonial settler legality, anchored in settlement security, and, therefore, permanence.

The goal of keeping the West Bank on the diplomatic "back burner" was also enhanced by the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty of October 1994. The hasty peace with King Hussein was timed conveniently for easing pressure on Rabin to do "too much" at once. Israeli and world public opinion would have to digest the peace and wait for Arafat to fulfill his obligations under the Oslo and Cairo agreements, which have already been expanded. It is a ready-made excuse for Rabin.

A "NO-WIN" SITUATION FOR ARAFAT

The Israeli-supplied framework of the "peace process" as well as Israel's negotiating strategy have placed Arafat in a "no win" situation. His deal with Israel is predicated on an impossible equation. There can be no serious discussion of Israeli redeployment or extension of limited self-rule to the West Bank until Arafat decides to utilize the "strong police force", called for in the Oslo accords, to suppress all forms of Palestinian resistance to the occupation. But while such a decision was made a condition for further diplomatic progress, it by no means constitutes a guarantee of success. And yet, while Arafat might appear to Israel as more qualified when pursuing that course, he would be condemned by his fellow Palestinians as a puppet and a quizzling. That had, in fact, already happened when the police force of an increasingly isolated Arafat fired on Hamas demonstrators on November 18, 1994, killing fourteen and injuring more than 150. Ten days before the incident, in words that can be seen as prophetic, Arafat's chief negotiator, Nabil Shaath expressed the Palestinian dilemma when he told

the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* on November 8:

I would suggest not making Arafat look like an Israeli agent, like an "Uncle Tom" serving his masters...the effect on us is devastating. I am in despair. Rabin does not even try to hide how much he despises us. If there wouldn't be a miracle the agreement between us will collapse ¹.

Had Nabil Shaath understood the essence of Israel's negotiating strategy, he would have spared himself the indignity of supplication. Indeed, miracles do not happen in negotiations. Israel's embarkation on that road was a strategic decision; and yet the agreement itself is structurally difficult, if not impossible, to implement, because it relates to the very nature of the Israeli state, which precludes genuine co-existence with the Palestinian people on equal basis. Thus, when the Rabin government diverted the negotiations *venue* from Washington to Oslo, it was making a strategic shift away from the hardly concealed stalling tactics of its Likud predecessors, while preparing its own gridlock that had the appearance of diplomatic progress. In a subtle and nuanced contrast to the Likud, Rabin opted for an agreement with a built-in conflict over meaning and objectives. It is because of that conflict and the diametrically opposed outcomes desired that the impasse continues. Indeed, one could say that the impasse born of this conflict is responsible for the worsening of the situation in the occupied territories, where Palestinian frustration at being thwarted at every step turned inward threatening a civil conflict.

Segmentation of the Palestine question by issues, regions and even negotiation stages have thus far constituted the biggest roadblocks which promoted the impasse. Had the issues of settlements, Jerusalem, and sovereignty not been deferred in accordance with a two-phased strategy, the question of settlement security would not have been a barrier for redeployment. Initial Palestinian self-governance would not have been probationary; Palestinian legitimacy would not have been held in abeyance awaiting elections, which are being hampered by the lack of Israeli redeployment, which itself is

being blocked by security concerns for West Bank settlements. Could such a self-defeating process be meant for implementation?

There is an urgent need now for collapsing the two phases in order to prevent the imminent diplomatic collapse which Shaath has cautioned about. In fact placing all issues on the table is the only sure way towards breaking the present impasse and resolving the dilemma in which Arafat has placed himself and the rest of the Palestinian people with him. That option, however, will require a major referendum which will ultimately affect the nature of the Israeli state and determine its readiness to reach a territorial compromise with the Palestinians. Only through such a compromise will the Palestinians be able to obtain a meaningful autonomy as a transitional measure towards independence. That, however is not a predicate of the "peace process" as now conceived by the Rabin government. Nor is there a possibility in the foreseeable future that any other Israeli coalition could put forth a viable alternative that would better meet the minimum expectations of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, Rabin, favored by 52 percent support against 42 percent for Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu, is in no position to challenge the maxims of the greater Eretz Yisrael idea, supported openly by the settler movement and Likud but less publicly by labor.²

THE ROLE OF ZIONISM AND THE NATURE OF THE STATE

The preceding reveals that any forward movement beyond the "Gaza-Jericho First" formula would require a genuine debate of Zionist history in which the difficult questions, submerged since 1948, would be raised. The ongoing debate of Zionist historiography is so far limited to Israeli intellectuals but has no bearing on the active political arena. Professor Ehud Sprinzak, for example, writes in his book, *The Ascendancy of Israel's Radical Right*, that a major civil conflict cannot be ruled out in Israel in the event of a territorial compromise.³ The writer

Aharon Megged says that the debate among Israeli intellectuals raises the question of whether Zionism is “a movement of national plundering or a movement of a persecuted people acting according to a humane ethic, seeking compromise and peace”.⁴ The historian Benny Morris, author of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*, wrote in *Haaretz* (June 24, 1994) that “the Zionist Ethos claims that we came to this land not to exploit the natives and expel them, and not to occupy them by force. Instead, we came here to ‘build and be built,’ i.e. to create an independent life alongside another nation.”⁵ Another intellectual, historian Ilan Pappé (author of *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947-1951*) wrote in the same issue of *Haaretz* (June 24, 1994) that “there is a need to dissolve the sharp contradiction between a Zionist and Jewish state and human rights and democracy. A democratic pluralistic Israel as a part of the Mediterranean is also Israel with many historical narratives. Such an Israel has a chance at a common future”.⁶

Only when and if a similar critique of Zionist history enters the general Israeli discourse, would the present “peace process” be likely to assume some substantive dimensions. Otherwise it will continue to be a strategy in itself-peace as the continuation of war through other means. Israeli strategists are rather candidly speaking of the “peace process” as “part of a military strategy”. *The Boston Globe* reporter Ethan Bronner quoted an Israeli general as saying, “That is how Israel will turn Clausewitz on his head.” Through the peace process, “Israel is making diplomacy into war by other means.” The process is designed to enable Israeli strategists to focus on the high tech war for the 21st century, building long-range missiles, and anti-missile missiles, and developing enormous fire power, laser-guided projectiles, and night vision equipment, while leaving the repression role to Yasir Arafat. It is a cost-effective strategy based on the notion of the “small smart army.”

In light of Israel's skills at utilizing legal concepts and diplomatic means for accomplishing strategic goals, moving

beyond the Gaza-Jericho affair will continue to be hampered by Israel's strategic priorities. Palestinian basic needs on the other hand, are relegated as tertiary and are manipulated through the incremental process of negotiations in phases. "Early empowerment" and the entire concept of splitting the negotiations into interim and final status stages—are based on the flawed assumption that the real barriers to conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian case are psychological; Palestinians must demonstrate their willingness and ability to live in peace with the Israelis in order to enjoy the rights conferred upon them by international law and the dictates of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Early empowerment can be meaningful only if it were the result of a political decision to establish true self-governance in the West Bank, instead of being considered as the necessary first step towards that self-governance. How can the Palestinians in the West Bank be "empowered" in the field of taxation regulations, when they have neither legislative, nor adjudicative authority or even police powers? How can their institutions tax a population lacking representation? Representation requires national elections, which cannot be held until the occupation army withdraws or redeploy. Yet how can the army redeploy while there are numerous settlers in settlements spread over the West Bank to protect? How can the Palestinians assume responsibility for health conditions when they have no control over the sewage disposal of the settlements, and when such sewage contaminates their springs and streams? How can the Palestinians manage education when the Army subordinates normal educational activities to the security of settlers, closing schools at will or requiring students to start classes at 7:00 A.M. before the settlers begin their early commuting to work? How can the Palestinians manage tourism under "early empowerment" when the Palestinian "minister of tourism" Elias Friej had to submit an application in October 1994 to make the fifteen minute journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem for the purpose of attending a trade and tourism conference?

These and other questions illustrate the folly of early empowerment, which is a mere device to finesse Israel's reluctance to move beyond the Gaza-Jericho deal. Unwilling to comprehend this reality and the strategic imperative behind it, headline writers such as that appearing on the front page of the *New York Times* (November 9, 1994) "Israel Will Speed up Talks for Palestinian Self-Rule" can be very misleading. Quoting Rabin in the *Times* story, correspondent Clyde Haberman writes: "The discussion will be comprehensive-all the issues that need to be solved to move to the next stage." Not only are the structural problems facing the next stage being ignored, but also the blame for lack of progress is placed on "terrorism" and/or attributed to the lack of funding from western donors. At least this is what Rabin claimed according to a story by John Battersby in the *Christian Science Monitor* (November 10, 1994) under the headline "Lifeboat Politics: Israel and PLO Battle Extremes." *The Washington Post* expressed unwarranted optimism about the prospects for peace in an editorial paying tribute to Rabin and Peres under the title "Two Who Earned A Noble Prize," October 27, 1994:

In achieving peace with Jordan, Syria and the Palestinians, Israel will give up more than land. Rabin and Peres also give up part of the future. They give up a legal limbo that holds open the option of redrawing Israel's boundaries from time to time by military conquest. They accept the limits and existence of a normal state, with its own special characteristics, in the international community.⁷

In fact, if what the *Post* has editorialized is true with regard to Israel's approach to the Palestine question, then the principal obstacles and impediments to peace are no longer existent. That assumption, however, would hold only if the nature of the Israeli State has been re-evaluated in order to accommodate real co-existence with the Palestinian people. According to the *Post*, such re-evaluation has already taken place with regard to Israel's relations with Syria: "the debate is essentially an ideological one about the nature of Israel, not Assad's character

or negotiating strategy." ⁸ If that indeed is what the latest Israeli Nobel laureates have done with regard to Syria, the same presumed reevaluation has not been extended to Israel's attitude towards Palestine.

When and if that happens, gimmicks such as "early empowerment" and "secondary legislation" would not be necessary to maintain the gridlock while keeping the facade of negotiations alive. Early empowerment would be replaced by real empowerment sustained by representative institutions deriving their legitimacy from the will of the people. There would be no need to camouflage the occupation with a token legislative council assigned administrative tasks. Only a genuine national legislature, like the Israeli Knesset, could truly empower the Palestinian people and signal the end of the military occupation.

That prospect, however will have to await the crucial, yet unlikely debate about Zionist history and the nature of the Israeli State. If the Zionists Ethos claim is correct about coming to Palestine "to build and be built", not to "exploit the natives and expel them, and not to occupy them by force", then Israel would have to make hard choices: between peace and the settlements, between peace and a permanent exile for the refugees, between peace and Jerusalem as the eternal capital, between peace and Israel as a perpetual Western colonial project.

The latest chapter of the "peace process," ongoing without real success for nearly three decades, is less about peace and more about bureaucratic procedures designed to countenance and reconfirm the existing situation while creating the pretense of a diplomatic breakthrough. The illusion of peace produced by the agreements is far more dangerous than the untenable status-quo. The driving forces behind that illusion have distorted the essence of the conflict and paralyzed the efforts towards a real solution. Consequently, they have tangibly prolonged the occupation and obstructed the opportunity for a peace with justice the only peace which can promise an

enduring coexistence between Arab and Jew, the only peace capable of transforming the political landscape of the Middle East, from a perpetual battleground to a terrain of progress and prosperity.

Naseer Aruri

- * **Naseer Aruri** was born in Jerusalem, Palestine; he lived in the U.S. since 1954. He has been on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth since 1965 where he chaired the Department of Political Science from 1969 to 1977. Dr. Aruri is the author of *Jordan: A Study of Political Development*, *Enemy of The Sun: Poems of Palestinian Resistance*; Editor of *Middle East Crucible: Studies on the Arab-Israeli Confrontation of 1973*. His latest book, *Occupation: Israel Over Palestine*, was selected by *CHOICE* Magazine as one of the “Outstanding Books for 1984/85”. Dr. Aruri was a three-term member of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International, U.S.A. 1984-1990; was a member of the Board of Directors of Middle East Watch, New York, Jan. 1990-May 1992; a member of the Board of Directors of Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), 1987-1989; a member of the Editorial Board of Third World Quarterly (London); is a founding member of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, and its fourth president (1971) as well as sixteenth president (1983); and, a founding member of the Arab Organization of Human Rights and serves as its NGO Representative at the United Nations, New York; a member of the Board of Al-Haq, Law In The Service of Man, Ramallah, West Bank, and the Board of the Palestine Human Rights Information Center. He has lectured at more than 200 University campuses in the U.S. and abroad and appeared on several television programs. Dr. Aruri has participated in many national and international conferences and represented Amnesty International at U.N. conferences in Geneva.

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Footnotes

1. *New York Times*, November 9, 1994
2. Public opinion poll in the Jewish Advocate. November 18, 1994
3. See “Revising History: Unveiling Zionism”, Issues: *Perspectives on Middle East and World Affairs*. Vol 3 No 2 (October 1994). Paris p. 16 . See also Ethan Bronner, “Rewriting Zionism.” *The Boston Globe Magazine*. November 27, 1994. pp. 22-47
4. *Haaretz*, (Week end Supplement) June 10, 1994, Quoted in *Ibid*
5. *Ibid*.
6. *Ibid*. p.15
7. *Washington Post* (editorial) October 27, 1994.
8. *Ibid*.



Worshipping America

America occupies a huge and yet conflicting space in the contemporary imagination of the Arabs, and, indeed, much of the Third World. It is the big *Khawaja* in a society that worships Westerners, especially those who have power. *Khawaja* is a term coined back in the colonial days when the British and the French held sway over various parts of the Arab World. I am told that there are corresponding terms in other parts of the Third World which usually refer to a foreigner, considered superior to any native, no matter how smart or accomplished the native may be. An Arab may be said to have a *Khawaja* complex if he or she considers anything Western to be far superior to anything or anyone in one's own culture.

Americans are now the new *Khawajas* and things American are highly valued. American popular culture, seen through Hollywood productions is admired and imitated. The sons and daughters of the elite dance to the tunes of American music. American products are consumed as items of prestige. American films are said to be superior to any other production, local or foreign. American military might is worshipped because it came to the defense of some against others. American goodwill is sought with zeal because America is the source of foreign aid. Practically anything America wants now, it is likely to get. It is said to be the only superpower left in the

world and it has achieved total hegemony over the Arab East. In the Arab World today, America decides how much oil to produce, at what price. It also decides what kind of settlement to implement, with whom, and how fast. This is indeed the American era in the Arab East.

How does one explain this love affair with America, given what American politics had done to the region over so many decades. How does one understand the fact that the more pain America inflicts on the region, the more the Arabs worship it? Here it must be clear that I am referring only to those Arabs who are members of the ruling elite and the class in society that serves as their political base. There are many others in the Arab World who are not infatuated with America, and who refuse to accept its cultural and political hegemony.

This essay represents a modest effort to begin the process of thinking about America and its role in order to try to understand. It is by no means a full and complete picture of what America is or is not. Such a task requires more time and space and should eventually culminate in a major work on the subject. More interviews with people in the region and a more careful reading of the writings of prominent people are needed. I hope that this essay will, at least, raise some questions and point to the need for a debate. Throughout this text, I will interject a personal narrative if I think it relevant to develop or illustrate a particular theme. I do this not because I think my own personal experiences are in themselves terribly important but because it is necessary for those of us who have lived in the United States for many years to initiate discussion on this subject in order to help people in the region understand America better.

The Arabs entered the modern age as consumers, not producers of goods. They therefore remain on the periphery of the global economy in a state of dependency. The availability of large sums of petrodollars did not alter this condition. For a brief moment the oil producing countries had an opportunity to dramatically reorganize the economic and political conditions

in the region. They failed to do so; they therefore remain in a state of near total dependency on the West in general and on the United States in particular. The latter is the source of goods, foreign aid, technical assistance, political manipulation and military protection.

The secular elites who govern the various Arab countries rely upon a narrow social and political base. They feel more threatened than ever by the challenge of indigenous, nativistic and Islamic movements. They think that their salvation lies in an attempt to reorder the political conditions in the region in a way that helps them strengthen their chances of survival. America and Israel offer them protection.

Culturally, the Arabs have engaged, for over a century, in the task of translating Western literary and scientific productions and their popularization to their publics. The effort to transmit Western knowledge continues unabated. There is always a large gap between what the West produces and what the Arabs translate because work in the West moves much faster than the effort of translation. So the Arabs are always far behind.

In the Middle East, Americans first appeared on the scene as missionaries and philanthropists. They set up the American University of Beirut and a similar institution in Cairo. The former played a crucial role in the educational formation of many of the leaders of the Arab World. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Arabs have studied in America and later returned to serve their countries.

In the post World War II period, America enjoyed a positive image throughout the Arab World. Untainted by the colonial experience, America was seen as a bulwark against British and French influence which had, for a very long time, wreaked havoc on the region. In 1956, President Eisenhower firmly told the British, the French and the Israelis to withdraw from the Suez Canal and the Sinai. A man in the town of Bethlehem, a refugee from 1948 Palestine, was so impressed that he proudly decided to name his first son Eisenhower. The child came to be

known as Eisenhower Mohammed Hassan.

In those days, as in many years past, America was seen as a beacon of hope, a far away place to which one could migrate, and where one could work hard, save money, and return to do something worthwhile. One of the many stories that circulated among average people was that of the Shoman brothers who went to America carried goods on their backs, sold door to door, amassed wealth and returned to establish the Arab Bank which eventually became one of the most successful banks in the Middle East. Other emigrants went to Latin America and did the same thing . They would return to visit or to spend their last years. They spoke with an accent that had disappeared long ago and sang songs that no one could remember. But the place of distinction, for some reason, was always reserved for those who migrated to North America and somehow made it.

As soon as British and French influence began to recede, America began to impinge on the life of the region in extremely negative ways. In the late fifties and throughout the 1960's, America looked at the Middle East through the prism of the Cold War: an arena of U.S.-Soviet competition, a large oil reservoir that was deemed crucial for the rising industrial powers, and an expanse that is supposed to be pathologically hostile to the interests of the valiant and allegedly beleaguered State of Israel. Very quickly, the majority of Arabs began to see America as the enemy of Arab nationalism and as the devoted friend of Israel. And almost as quickly, American Arabists and their students among the Arabs began to put forth the thesis that eventually held sway for many decades and that served to rationalize American policy toward the region: America, according to this thesis, was not inherently hostile to the Arab World. Americans are victims of ignorance about the Arabs and about the Arab-Israeli conflict. The key is to try to shape public opinion by informing people of the facts. In a democratic society, an informed public will lead to informed policy. What is needed is a balanced, even-handed approach because America has substantial interests in the Arab World and is

committed to the existence of the State of Israel. Arabs who were somewhat favorable to America and others who were hostile clung to this thesis for many years, despite the abundance of evidence to the contrary, namely, that American policy in the region was informed by strategic calculations and not by an active pro-Israel lobby that capitalized on American ignorance and naivete.

In 1960, I decided, mainly for financial reasons, to go the United States to pursue my higher education. A professor at Yale University who was visiting Jerusalem at the time and who was instrumental in helping me gain admittance asked me what I intended to study. I said that I loved literature and wanted to study English and American literature. He was enthusiastic and immediately said: "maybe you will eventually write the answer to *Exodus* and help correct the stereotypes. This is what the Arabs need." At the time, I had no earthly idea what he was talking about. I had not read *Exodus*; nor was I enthralled by the sound track of the movie. It was only after I came to America that I found out the overwhelming impact of the book and the film.

The thesis of American ignorance and perhaps innocence had deep roots. The Americans we came in contact with appeared kind, generous and helpful. They were obviously ignorant about our lives and our history. The educated among them came to see the light when they became familiar with our stories. The others appeared so hopelessly naive: on the streets of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Palestinian urchins who tried to peddle souvenirs, cards, vials of holy water from the Jordan River (usually tap water) eventually developed a hierarchy of perceptions; French tourists were hopelessly stingy; the Italians nearly as poor as we were; the British arrogant and hard to deal with. The place of honor in this ranking of potential suckers was nearly always reserved for Americans. Not only were they generous and loose with their money, they could also be easily had. Street wisdom came to reinforce the prevailing thesis. To my knowledge, no counter thesis ever emerged.

Aside from these vague perceptions, some of which gleaned from watching American movies, I had no knowledge of America before I set foot in New York in August 1960. No mention of America or even anything American was ever made in my school. We learned French history by heart and read English literature voraciously. To my knowledge, America is still absent from any school curriculum anywhere in the Arab World, this, despite, the long, complex and sometimes nasty encounters between America and the region. Edward Said is certainly correct when he bemoans the absence of any research center in the Arab World devoted to the study of America even though many influential people in the region are graduates of American institutions. But political decisions in the Arab World are not usually informed by research findings.

Toni Morrison, the winner of the Nobel prize for literature, is an African-American woman. In one interview, I recall her saying that, although she was born and raised in America, she has never really felt like an American. As another hyphenated American, I can fully appreciate what it is like to live in a gray area . Whose America did I embrace when I became a citizen of this country? I applied for citizenship in 1972 after completing my required four years of continuous residence as a legal resident alien. My wife, at the time, was a natural born American citizen and my daughter was born in 1970. I worked as an assistant professor of Political Science at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

During the application procedure, it became quickly obvious to me that I was facing several handicaps: I was an outspoken defender of the rights of the Palestinians: I spoke to Church groups, universities, and other forums. I wrote in the papers and appeared on local television stations. In those years, it later became known, President Nixon had initiated Operation Boulder, according to which visible Arab-Americans were put under surveillance. This came in the aftermath of the spectacular acts of airplane hijacking by Palestinians as well as the killings at the Munich Olympics. In the second place, I had

been active in the struggle against the war in Vietnam. Along with a Jewish colleague who became a close friend, I organized peaceful marches, teach-ins and rallies against the war. In the third place, I was an academician who taught Political Science. In those days, liberal university professors, especially in the social sciences, were blamed for what American youth were doing against the war in Vietnam.

For the immigration officer who came from Atlanta to interview me, I was obviously a *persona non grata*. He had to find a way to prevent me from becoming a citizen. He couldn't and I eventually did become one, despite his efforts. In America, people have rights. As a resident alien, I had all the rights of a citizen with the exception of the right to vote. All of my activities fell under the protection of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and assembly. I had violated no laws. On the day of the swearing ceremony, I woke up depressed. All my life, I had thought that I would return to the Middle East where I would somehow make a difference in the lives of people. Here I am sealing my fate by agreeing to become an American citizen. The process I had gone through was humiliating. I was made to feel that I could never be a normal citizen. The immigration officer saw to it that my feelings about this moment would be jaded. Did I want to be a citizen of a country where I felt like I was living in enemy territory? Did I want to identify with a country that was engaged in massive killing in Vietnam? Did I want to be part of a history that is full of acts of genocide against the native Indians, not to mention, of course, the burden of slavery as well as the ongoing discrimination against people of color? I finally did arrive at some rationalization. The human mind is an amazing composite of things that allow a person to play all sorts of tricks on oneself. I said, of course no. I am joining instead the America of those whom I knew throughout my stay here and who were kind, generous and understanding. I am proud to be in the company of those who fight racism and who take risks to fight against U.S. intervention in Vietnam and

elsewhere in the Third World. My America was that of Martin Luther King, Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez, James Baldwin, Paul Robeson, and Toni Morrison. I like this America and detest the other. I remain an exile despite the fact that I am a full citizen and, I might add, I relish living in this gray area. I wouldn't want it any other way.

... Shortly after I arrived at Duke University in August 1961, I happened to be walking through Duke University Hospital. I came upon some water fountains and stopped to get a drink of water. I noticed that there were two fountains, one labeled white and the other labeled colored. I stood there for a minute trying to decide which one to drink from. I had never been confronted with the question of whether I am white or colored. So what am I? America forces you to think in terms of color, national origin, and religion. Here again I resolved the dilemma by deciding to drink from both.

... America is the land of the I. It is difficult for me, having been raised in a fairly traditional Muslim household and in a traditional Arab environment where community is important, to learn to think in terms of I. But this is, as Christopher Lasch has written a culture of narcissism where instant gratification reigns supreme, where people are mostly preoccupied with their own narrow personal welfare, and where a sense of community is mostly absent. Modernity has brought us to this point and modern capitalism has become a system that requires consumption: I spend therefore I am. At the same time, there are areas in this great expanse where people think and act on the basis of community in what Robert Bellah calls lifestyle enclaves. I must add, however, that these areas are shrinking.

A culture of narcissism is of necessity a culture that relies on therapy. America is the great provider of technologies of the soul. There is an army of such technicians (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, guidance counselors) and everyone, at some point or another in their lives, relies upon therapy to be able to make it.

...Many years ago, the local newspaper used to print a

weekly column listing the divorces in the community. The column became so long that newspapers decided not to print it anymore. The stresses and strains of modern capitalism are such that most couples are simply unable to fight the urge to separate. Human relations, in a culture of narcissism are mostly utilitarian: let us give marriage a try, many would say. If it doesn't work, we'll just get divorced.

The collapse of institutions such as marriage and the family has given rise to a rhetoric of family values. Reactionary politicians and their Christian supporters on the right have appropriated this rhetoric and are now forcing liberals to talk about the same thing. But this is simply a fad: a few books will be published on the subject and their authors will make millions of dollars. Politicians will milk the topic for what it is worth. In the end, little if anything will be done about these issues. A new fad will replace the current one and media attention will shift.

...In America, the media provide the public what Irving Goffman calls a "frame" through which they look at the world. Frames are ways of organizing the world or part of it in a manner that makes it controllable, manageable, and easy to interpret. Everything is seen through a frame constructed by the print and the electronic media. The majority of people get their information through television which programs for a fourth grade mentality. A relatively small percentage of people, known as the informed public, get their information from newspapers. The more people watch television, the less they know about the world around them. So, by and large, the public is poorly informed: on occasions, someone would publish a poll that reveals that the majority cannot name their own congressman or senator, or that they think the WHO is an agency of the U.S. secret service.

It is misleading, however, to assume that those who make decisions in Washington, D.C. are just as ill informed. One can always find a congressman or senator who knows very little about a foreign area. But those in the Department of State or in

the National Security Council who are in charge tend to be well informed.

Generally speaking, when there is consensus within the government about a particular foreign policy issue, the media will, according to Herbert Gans in *Deciding What's News* take their cue from the State Department or the White House. This has been the case on the Middle East where certain canons have been held constant for many years. By contrast, at various times when there was conflict within the government on policy toward Central America, the media published both sides of the question. Articles critical of Israel's excesses appeared only at times when Israeli behavior threatened to possibly harm American interests.

One can talk of an American frame of Arabs and Muslims cultivated by the media and by some academic experts. Edward Said has written extensively on this subject beginning with his book *Covering Islam*. It is fundamentally negative and contemptuous of things Arab and Muslim. Only points of view that reinforce the frame are usually allowed to be expressed in print or on television: this explains why Fuad Ajami and others are often allowed to rail against things Arab and Muslim with utter contempt. The role of media experts is to validate the dominant frame, not to inform the public. Only rarely would an Edward Said or some other Arab commentator who stands in opposition to the dominant frame be permitted to air his views.

At the moment, much effort is being spent to construct a frame that targets so-called Islamic fundamentalism as the new threat to the world, especially after the collapse of communism. Samuel Huntington at Harvard talks about a clash of civilizations. And in a more crude way, Steven Emerson uses "60-minutes" on television to make all kinds of spurious allegations about the activities of Muslim groups in the U.S. Here the customary standards of reporting are suspended. Hearsay, innuendo and blatant lies are freely used to paint a horrible picture of groups bent on terror and holy war. One wonders what connection there is between Israeli intelligence,

the American government and American reporters in general. One also wanders about the myth of media independence in a democratic society.

...The great American historian Carl Becker once said that, in their drive west, Americans were always busy trying to recreate the world in their own image of it. At the height of the Cold War, America exported the myth of modernization to the Third World. Not only did the media talk about it at length, at times painting ludicrous pictures of modernizing leaders such as Marcos of the Philippines, the Shah of Iran and many others. Many in the academy produced tome after tome talking about modernization and development, modernization and democracy, and modernization and communication.

A country was considered modern if it had an elite that Americans could communicate with in English, consumed American products, dressed in Western clothes, talked about American popular culture and voted with America in the United Nations. Never mind that this elite probably used instruments of torture and repression to stay in power, or that they totally ignored the needs of the majority of their own people, in the process stealing much of American foreign aid to their own countries. That modernization never led to development or democracy is now fairly well ignored. And it does not mean that people will revise their earlier judgement. The myth persists largely because it continues to serve the same political purposes.

Democracy is fine if it brings people to power that we can tolerate or work with. If, God forbid, it should bring to power a group of Muslim fundamentalists (as in Algeria recently) or socialists (as in Chile in the early 1970's), then it does not work. Told that Salvador Allende had been duly elected by his own people in a free election, Kissinger is said to have responded: "I am not responsible for the stupidity of the Chilean people."

The American system works, despite its problems and despite the fact that it manages to elect some people of dubious ability to office. But there is a gap between the system as it is

portrayed in popular mythology and exported by the media to the rest of the world and the real functioning of the system. It is, at bottom, a system that guarantees a division of power and wealth in America. The difference between the two main parties is one of style, not substance. They compete over who is better qualified to manage the affairs of the country. It is a system of guided democracy designed to ensure that those who are willing to play by the rules will be able to participate. This is why, in their interventions overseas, Americans have always poured money and support to groups and parties that they think they can work with, or that more closely resemble them.

In dealing with the opposition, American politics has developed the fine art of cooptation. To give in on matters of symbolic politics and to stand firm on matters of substance. This has been the way that the Civil Rights Movement as well as other protest movements have ultimately been cooped.

Do Americans honor their commitments? Yes, if these commitments are made to friends and allies. But commitments to people perceived as enemies are another matter. In their history, Americans have signed more than 122 treaties with the native Americans and violated each and every one of them. Yasser Arafat asked during the siege of Beirut in the Summer of 1982 if the American government would honor the agreement negotiated by Philip Habib concerning the protection of Palestinian civilians left in the camps. He was told about the historical commitment of the United States to the native Americans. But Arafat had no choice except to evacuate Beirut and to leave the civilians behind. Ultimately, the Israel army entered the city, surrounded the camps and permitted the Lebanese Phalangist militia to carry out a systematic massacre of Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila.

America is a complex society with a complex history. It is an advanced post-industrial society where a person may enjoy basic freedom and a relatively easy, uncomplicated life. It has much to offer the rest of the world. But the America seen through the eyes of most people in the Arab World is nowhere

near the real America.

In his recent book, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993, p.294), Edward Said makes the following important observation: "There is still hardly any literature in Arabic that portrays Americans; the most interesting exception is Abdelrahman Munif's massive series of novels *Cities of Salt*, but his books are banned in several countries, and his native Saudi Arabia has stripped him of his citizenship. To my knowledge there is still no institute or major academic department in the Arab World whose main purpose is the study of America, although the United States is by far the largest, most significant outside force in the contemporary Arab World." It is necessary to study American history and society in order to be able to understand American politics. The pervasive ignorance of America throughout the Arab World has often led to the mushrooming of conspiracy theories; one of the most entrenched is the theory that the CIA runs American foreign policy. According to this theory the Palestinian Intifada was the work of the CIA and so was the victory of Khomeini in Iran, and the recent war in the Gulf. Another theory is that the Jews run American foreign policy on behalf of Israel. Conspiracy theories are not limited to fringe groups in society; they run the gamut from the least educated to the leadership in most of the Arab countries. It is important that the Arabs try to understand this America that impinges so much on their lives. It is even more important that the Arabs who are heirs to a great culture and civilization begin to dig deep into their past and try to develop a viable response to the onslaught of modernism, before their societies sink into the abyss of cultural despair that American hegemony is bound to bring about.

I am reassured that at least some Arab intellectuals are beginning to think about this subject in a serious manner. A significant start has been made by the well-known Egyptian thinker and philosopher Hassan Hanafi in his major work, *Introduction to the Science of Occidentalism* (Cairo, 1992). Hanafi calls on Arab thinkers to confront their past, the West

and the present and come up with an authentic culture that is based on the needs of their society, in essence to arrive at a new paradigm. A nucleus of such an authentic national project is already under way in the works of a few important Arab writers both in the Near East and in the Maghreb. But the work of trying to understand America in order to be able to confront its political and cultural hegemony remains to be done.

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George Azar

"Your journey is our journey, and America will stand with you now and always." *Clinton's remarks to the Israeli Knesset.*



Fractured elbow

George Azar

AN ISRAELI HEGEMONY OVER THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST

On April 17 1992, the Passover Eve, two Israeli army generals who can be regarded as the next in rank after the Chief of Staff gave exhaustive interviews to the Hebrew press. The interviews are: "All means are justified for the sake of preventing any Arab state from developing a nuclear capability", in *Maariv*, by the Deputy Chief of Staff, general Amnon Shahak-Lipkin, interviewed by Yaakov Erez and Immanuel Rozen; and "Iran can develop nuclear capability in 10 years' time", in *Yedioth Ahronot*, by the commander of Military Intelligence, general Uri Saguy, interviewed by Ron Ben-Yishay. On the same day Oded Brosh, a distinguished expert in nuclear politics who can be presumed to speak in a semi-official capacity, published an article in *Haaretz*, entitled "For the Dimona reactor haters to pay heed", which for the first time in the Hebrew press openly discusses the options in the actual use of Israeli nuclear weapons during a war. The contents of these three items should be juxtaposed with some press articles which can generalize our knowledge of Israeli strategic aims and of the nuclear factor in Israeli strategic planning. Relying on these sources, this report will elaborate on those aims.

Before doing so, however, it may be worthwhile to remind readers, that since Israeli strategies and policies are

regional in their orientation, their concern with the Palestinians and their conditions is quite secondary. It goes without saying that the oppression of Palestinians does not interest the Israeli strategists in the least. It follows that what goes under the name of "the solution of the Palestinian problem", whatever the nature of that "solution", cannot possibly bring peace, because Israeli strategies are aimed at establishing a hegemony over the entire Middle East, conceived of as extending from India to Mauritania. Of course, the first victim of Israeli expansionism in search of such a hegemony is the Palestinian nation. But in Israeli strategic thinking the extension and perpetuation of Jewish jurisdiction over the entire Land of Israel, however extravagantly its borders may be defined, is far from being the end of the story...

... A long-standing Israeli custom commands the generals in active service to stop short of saying too much in such interviews, but it lets semi-official experts or retired generals reveal the Israeli strategic intentions to the nation's elite in a more informative manner. As I said at the beginning of this report, an explanation of the crucial and most sensitive Israeli strategic aims, concerning the role of nuclear weapons in over-all Israeli strategy was left to Oded Brosh, writing in *Haaretz* on the same day when the interviews with the two generals appeared. Brosh begins by saying that some Israelis are now raising the question whether "Israeli nuclear power" helps or obstructs a transferral of the regional conflict to diplomatic channels. This he deplores, since the very phrasing of this question in such terms "introduces a bias in favor of the recent opponents of Israel's nuclear option, while casting a negative light on the supporters of this option". He is particularly virulent against some unnamed advocates of an "appeasement" in the form of only "a limited use of Israeli nuclear power, referred to as the last minute option". Those obscure remarks may refer to the bare beginning of a belated and still rather narrowly focused but a least serious media discussion of the health hazards contingent on the very

existence of nuclear installations. The fact is that Brosh's article was "balanced" in *Haaretz* by another article, printed right next to it, which for the first time in Israel's history reported how some people had organized themselves in protest against health hazards stemming from the existence of a civilian nuclear installation in their neighborhood. But without any attribution, Brosh also refers to claims, never previously made and still unmentionable, that "Dimona might yet become another Chernobyl". He concedes that "the responsible authorities indeed need to test again and again" all their precautionary measures, forgetting only that "the authorities responsible" for Chernobyl also claimed that they had been recurrently testing their precautions. He prefers to leave unanswered the question of who in Israel can be authorized to test the testing undertaken by unnamed "authorities".

Brosh must be presumed to aim his polemic at some critics more prominent than those who concern themselves with health hazards. It is because he mentions some unnamed Israelis whose arguments I have never seen in print, yet who are said by him to argue "that in view of what the foreign media report from time to time about the growth of Israel's nuclear assets, their further growth should be halted. Sometimes it is even being argued that somebody, authorized or unauthorized, might activate one or several Israeli nuclear warheads through error or accident. Moreover, some argue that Israel's unremitting nuclear development only propels the Arab countries, Iran and other Moslem states to equip themselves with all sorts of non-conventional, but primarily nuclear, weapons". None of these expressed apprehensions have ever appeared in the censored Hebrew press, or in the mainstream international press, despite their seriousness.

Not only is the prospect of Dimona one day becoming another Chernobyl something to be seriously discussed. The prospect of Gush Emunim, or some secular right-wing fanatics, or some delirious Israeli army general seizing control of Israeli nuclear weapons and using them in accordance with their

"knowledge" of politics, or with "a Divine command" cannot be precluded either. In my opinion, the likelihood of the occurrence of some such calamity even grows in time. We should not forget that while Jewish society of Israel undergoes a steady political polarization, the Israeli security system increasingly relies on recruitment of cohorts from the ranks of the extreme Right.

Brosh hurries to admit to his readers that "not everybody who hates Dimona - whether in Israeli or abroad - hates Israel. On the contrary, a great many foreigners who perceive the Dimona reactor as evil have an affection for Israel". Yet with the Israelis who "hate Dimona" things apparently are not quite the same. Brosh is clearly worried by their critique, especially since they are said by him to propose "that the Dimona reactor be closed" in order to be thereafter "accessible to international controls capable of proving to our neighbors that we no longer produce any fissionable substances". Such a proof could be offered "to our neighbors" either in a gesture of good will or within the framework of a regional settlement. But while admitting the desirability of more frequent and thorough checks to preclude Chernobyl-like accidents, Brosh disqualifies "all other apprehensions of the enemies of Dimona as flunking the test of technical and political realities in our region". We need to keep in mind that Israeli censorship has thus far prevented the publication of what "the enemies of Dimona" have to say. We know about their existence and their arguments only what their open enemy, Brosh, wanted and was permitted by that censorship to tell us.

Let me ignore Brosh's brief, superficial and in my view inaccurate presentation of the mentioned "technical realities". Let me just mention that he highly commends "what goes under the name of the neutron bomb, developed by the Americans in the 1970s". Let me concentrate instead on what, apparently reiterating the lessons learned from his mentors, he has to say about "the political realities in our region", insofar as they have a bearing upon Israeli nuclear power. Regarding the uses of

Israeli nuclear power during a war, Brosh sees two major options: the first, which he calls "the last minute option", is defined as "a scenario which in fact presumes that Israel will refrain from making any nuclear threats, unless it is defeated by conventional weapons, or can realistically expect such a defeat as imminent, or is threatened by the use of non-conventional weapons". In this way "the Arab leaders can be denied victory" by a threat of "the destruction of the Arab civilization". In my view, the just quoted phrase can be interpreted as meaning that Israel has contingency plans for cases of extreme emergency, and that such plans envisage a devastation by nuclear weapons of a considerable number of Arab urban centers and of such crucial installations as the Aswan Dam (whose destruction was envisaged in Israel before 1973). This awful possibility needs to be faced, however horrifying may be the thought about its direct effects in the Arab world and indirect effects upon the entire world in terms of massive casualties. The likely existence of such plans needs to be considered jointly with the already quoted passage about "somebody authorized or unauthorized [who] might activate one or several Israeli nuclear warheads through error or accident". A juxtaposition of the two passages adds to both clarity and horror. By 1992, Israel already abounds in Jewish religious zealots whose influence within the Security System is growing steadily. Gush Emunim or the followers of the Lubavitcher Rebbe (among whom one, general Ben-Hanan, is holding a high position in the army) are quite capable of activating such scenarios even in peacetime, for the sake of thus advancing their Messianic prophecies which by definition imply that God will protect the Jews from any injury and inflict devastation on Gentiles alone.

But Brosh does not favor "the last minute option". Being by no means a religious fanatic, he does clearly realize that this option implies not just "the destruction of the Arab civilization", but also "our own national suicide". He also has strategic objections against this option which can be conjectured to draw on the experience of the October 1973

War. He anticipates that the Arab leaders might attack Israel, not for the sake of defeating it, but for other reasons. In case the attack turns militarily successful, "the last minute option" might prompt the Israeli leaders, even the relatively sane among them, to a nuclear response. In report 85, which dealt with the long concealed events of the October 1973 War, I documented that the Israeli army high command of that time, possibly including Moshe Dayan, favored Israeli nuclear response against Syria, but were halted in doing so by Golda Meir, backed by Kissinger. But ...the Israeli army brass of today is, on the average, much more extremist than its predecessors in 1973. Much as I abhor everything Brosh says, I have to admit that he is not the most extremist among Israeli experts anticipating the use of nuclear weapons.

Brosh's own proposals, which can be assumed to be shared by the Israeli security system, rest on the assumption that "it is preferable to competently elaborate a system of options which would include the instrumentalities of handling the problems arising from a potential massive missile or armored attack against us, if it one day materializes, and which would prepare means to deter such an attack, or to foil it, if deterrence fails". He adds that pertinent Israeli "decisions should better not be dictated by outside factors", which is a transparent allusion to the U.S. This option should in his opinion not be resorted to, "as long as the threat to us comes from no more than a single, even if major, Arab state such as Syria", and if it involves only the use of conventional weapons. He immediately stipulates, however, that "even in such a case, it would be preferable to leave the enemy befogged about our intentions". Let me clarify, however, that in Israeli terminology, the launching -of missiles onto Israeli territory is regarded as "non-conventional", regardless of whether they are equipped with explosives or poison gas.

Still arguing against his unidentified opponents, Brosh contends that "there is no connection between the unremitting Israeli nuclear development and Arab, Iranian or Pakistani

pursuits", in spite of the fact that Israeli nuclear weapons are, or at least may be, aimed at those countries. But Brosh goes even deeper in his arguments. "Generally, in long-term security planning one cannot ignore the political factors. Israel must take into account, for example, that the Saudi royal family is not going to reign forever, or that the Egyptian regime may also change". Precisely because of such political contingencies Israel must remain free to use or threaten to use its nuclear weapons. But there is more to it: "We need not be ashamed that the nuclear option is a major instrumentality of our defense as a deterrent from attacking us. The three big democracies have relied on the same deterrent for decades". The very comparison of Israel's strategic aims with those of the U.S., Britain and France is an irrefutable proof of Israel's ambition to achieve the status of a superpower. But Israel can become a superpower only if it succeeds in establishing a hegemony over the entire Middle East. Meanwhile there is one crucial difference between Israel and "the three big democracies". The French, for example, pay for developing their own nuclear power. The development of Israeli nuclear power is, by contrast, financed by the Americans. Money for this purpose can be obtained only if Congress toes the line of the AIPAC, of the organized segment of the American Jewish community, and of its various allies. And in the process, the American public must be kept in the dark about Israel's real strategic aims.

The Israeli grand strategy has diverse strands. The task of blending them together into a single overarching concept was undertaken by General (reserves) Shlomo Gazit in an article remarkable for its lucidity and forthrightness. ("No demise as a strategic asset", *Yedioth Ahronot*, April 27). Gazit is a former Military Intelligence commander who often explains in the media the strategic aims of the Israeli security system, or else provides apologies for what the public tends to regard as its blunders or failures. His article has two avowed aims: the first, common also to several other prestigious Israeli press commentators writing at about the same time, is to convince the

public that what "we used to hear for many years, almost since the birth of the State, about Israel as a strategic asset for the U.S. and of the free world", remains no less valid after the demise of the USSR and the termination of the Cold War than it had been before. Let me ignore a greater part of his historical presentation of how and why could Israel become such a wonderful strategic asset in the past, except for a single point which contains something new. The point is that "Israel proposed to the American armed forces that in the event of a war [with the USSR] it might provide the Americans with a variety of services, namely harbor, resupply, storage, medical treatment and hospitalization services". Since Gazit is usually careful in his vocabulary, I stress that the Israeli offer is said to have been made to "the American armed forces" rather than to the American Administration.

However, Gazit admits that the value of Israel's proposed and actually rendered services of the Cold War time "did dwindle, perhaps even completely, when [the U.S.] no longer needed to be always prepared for a war with the Soviet bloc". This became apparent "over a year ago, when a military force largest since World War II assembled during the Gulf War in our own region, in the very heart of the Middle East. Israel was ignored when this war was fought. Moreover, hope was expressed and concrete steps taken for the single aim of precluding Israel's involvement in that war". Gazit even admits why it was so: "due to what from the Israeli point of view is a very sad but salient fact, namely that, (with the possible exception of Egypt which had signed a peace treaty with us), no other Arab state can be a party to any military or security-aimed alliance, if Israel is also a party to it". Such "Arab veto" , according to Gazit, explains why "the Israeli army was not actively involved in the war against Iraq", and why the armed forces of the anti-Iraqi coalition were not stationed on Israeli territory. In my view, it can be assumed that "the American armed forces" had at first intended to be "stationed on Israeli territory", but because of all these regional political

consideration Bush and Baker decided otherwise. That decision, which implied a diminished strategic significance for Israel, might have been more responsible than disagreement over loan guarantees and building settlement for explaining Israel's unfavorable disposition towards Bush and Baker. Expecting his readers to consequently ask, "what has still remained of Israel's traditional role as a strategic asset, then?", Gazit proceeds to lay bare the more decisive and lasting aspects of that role.

This is the second purpose of Gazit's article, even more important than the first. He believes, correctly in my view, that Israel still remains a strategic asset as it was in the past. His lucid explanation deserves to be quoted extensively:

"Israel's main task has not changed at all, and it remains of crucial importance. The geographical location of Israel at the center of the Arab-Muslim Middle East predestines Israel to be a devoted guardian of stability in all the countries surrounding it. Its [role] is to protect the existing regimes: to prevent or halt the processes of radicalization, and to block the expansion of fundamentalist religious zealotry. Israel has its red lines', which have a powerful deterrent effect by virtue of causing uncertainty beyond its borders, precisely because they are not clearly marked nor explicitly defined. The purpose of these red lines is to determine which strategic developments or other changes occurring beyond Israel's borders can be defined as threats which Israel will regard as intolerable, to the point of feeling compelled to use all its military power for the sake of their prevention or interdiction on " ,

In other words, the red lines are really Israeli dictatorial ultimatums imposed on other Middle Eastern states.

Gazit distinguishes "three kinds of developments" among the processes of radicalization "which qualify as intolerable" [to Israel]. The first category is constituted by acts of anti-Israeli terrorism originating from the territory of another state. Gazit is forthright enough to say that Israel then retaliates against a

given state not only in its own defense, but more decisively, in the best interest of an Arab government concerned. "An Arab government allowing a terrorist organization to run free, creates a monster which sooner or later will turn against it. If it does not take steps to halt any development hostile to itself and to reestablish its total control, it will eventually cease to rule its own country".

The second category of the red line is applied in case of "any entry of a foreign Arab military force onto the territory of a state which borders Israel, i.e. practically Jordan, Syria and Lebanon". (Although Egypt borders on Israel, it is not mentioned.) As in the previous case, Gazit is anxious to admit that, regardless of the military risks for itself, Israel has in such cases a benevolent concern for the stability of a given Arab regime. "An entry of a foreign Arab military force poses also a threat to the stability of the regime of the country thus affected, and sometimes also to the latter's sovereignty. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the Israeli red line which deters and prevents entries of foreign Arab military forces to countries neighboring with Israel, is also a stabilizing factor, which really protects the existing states and regimes in the entire Middle East".

The third category of the "red line" is in Gazit's view, and in mine as well, the most important. It is intended to preclude the developments which he defines as "threats of a revolt, whether military or popular, which may end up by bringing fanatical and extremist elements to power in states concerned. The existence of such threats has no connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict. They exist because the regimes [of the region] find it difficult to offer solutions to their socio-economic ills. But any development of the described kind is apt to subvert the existing relations between Israel and any of its neighbors. The prime examples of such a red line are the concerns for the preservation of Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. In both cases, Israel communicated to its neighbors that it will not tolerate anything that might encourage extremist forces to go all

the way, following in the footsteps of either the Iranians to the east, or the Algerians to the west". Gazit backs this statement up by mentioning the Israeli intervention in defense of the Jordanian regime during the "Black September" uprising of 1970, and discussing more extensively the developments in Lebanon in the wake of the outbreak of the Civil War in 1975. "When the Syrians were invited by some Maronites to intervene to stop the fighting after trouncing the Muslims, they were at first deterred [by Israel] from advancing. And when in the end the Syrian forces did advance, they took all the precautions, clearly avoiding anything which Israel could interpret as aberrant and thereby violating its red line". As is well-known (at least in Israel), that Syrian advancement had its culmination in the siege of Tel El-Zaatar and the massacre of the Palestinians there in 1976. The massacres were perpetrated by the Lebanese Falange supported by the Syrian army, with Israel fully approving. High Israeli army officers were then spotted as observers in the Falangist camp, located in the vicinity of where the Syrian troops were stationed.

According to Gazit, however, this form of "Israeli influence" may well extend beyond the Arab countries neighboring with Israel. "Indirectly, it also radiates onto all other states of our region. In almost all of them, some kind of radicalization is going on, except that the radical forces are deterred from pushing all the way through out of fear that their maximalism might prompt Israel to respond. Although no one would say so openly, I am positive that the regime of President Mubarak benefits from such an Israeli deterrence. If power [in Egypt] is ever seized by Islamic extremists, they will at once have to decide whether to recognize the peace treaty with Israel as binding them or not. It will be a most difficult decision for them. If they do recognize the treaty, they will compromise their own ideology. And if they don't recognize it, they will at once have a war for which they cannot possibly be ready".

In Gazit's view, by virtue of thus protecting all or most Middle Eastern regimes, Israel performs a vital service for "the

industrially advanced states, all of which are keenly concerned with guaranteeing the stability in the Middle East". He speculates that without Israel, the existing regimes of the region would have collapsed already long ago. He concludes:

"In the aftermath of the disappearance of the USSR as a political power with interests of its own in the region, a number of Middle Eastern states lost a patron, guaranteeing their political, military and even economic viability. A vacuum was thus created, with the effect of adding to the region's instability. Under such conditions, the Israeli role as a strategic asset in guaranteeing a modicum of stability in the entire Middle East, far from dwindling or disappearing, was elevated to the first order of magnitude. Without Israel, the West would have to perform this role by itself, when none of the existing superpowers really could perform it, because of various domestic and international constraints. For Israel, by contrast, the need to intervene is a matter of survival".

Let me recall in this context several facts of crucial importance. First, that speaking in the context of possible uses of Israeli nuclear power, Brosh revealed that Israel has contingency plans to be applied if "the Egyptian regime may change" or because "the Saudi royal family will not reign forever". By comparing Gazit with Brosh, we can grasp better the nature of Israeli strategic aims Israel is preparing for a war, nuclear if need be, for the sake of averting domestic change not to its liking, if it occurs in some or any Middle Eastern states. At some time after the fall of the Shah it was disclosed that in the last days of his regime the Israeli army planned to dispatch its elite units to Teheran in order to relieve the hard-pressed Iranian generals, except that Begin, in a display of relative moderation (as exemplified in report 99), refused to okay the venture. Yet Shamir, and in this respect even Rabin, are more extremist than Begin ever was, at least before he lost his sanity.

However, as Gazit points out, as long as the USSR collapsed it existed, Israel was a strategic factor of prime

importance, because the threat of Soviet intervention was to some extent deterring Israel from a direct and undisguised pursuit of hegemony over the entire Middle East. Now, he correctly observes, "a vacuum was created" which neither the U.S. nor any other "industrially advanced state" can fill, at least in Gazit's sense of the term. No faraway power will in the foreseeable future be able to invade a Middle Eastern state, while using or threatening to use its nuclear arms in the process, only because it would fear a domestic radicalization occurring within the internationally recognized borders of that state. Let us recall that even when Iraq persisted in its annexation of Kuwait, Bush could obtain no more than a slim majority in Congress in favor of going to war against Iraq. (I am purposefully ignoring the still controversial reports of the secret Iraqi offers to compromise.) Would Congress be expected to approve an invasion of a Middle Eastern state as a mere response to a popular revolution there, especially when the U.S. becomes as increasingly weaker as it noticeably does in the aftermath of the Gulf War? The answer cannot but be either categorically negative, or at least anticipative of nearly unsurmountable obstacles that the U.S. or any other Western power would in such a case have to cope with. Undoubtedly, no analogous obstacles would exist in Israel, where even the Knesset doesn't need to be consulted before an armed aggression. The Israeli government has the legal right to initiate a war, and it can be certain of an initial approval by a huge majority of the Jewish public, regardless of circumstances under which that war breaks out. In the past, whenever the Knesset was notified of an aggressive war already in progress, it would approve it enthusiastically, by a huge majority.

Knesset ramifications of the already ongoing wars actually occurred in 1967 and in 1982. But the best example of it, allowing to probe deeper into the pattern of the Knesset's behavior, is its ratification of the Suez War in 1956. After Ben-Gurion told the Knesset, on the third day of the war, that the war's purpose was "to reestablish the kingdom of David and

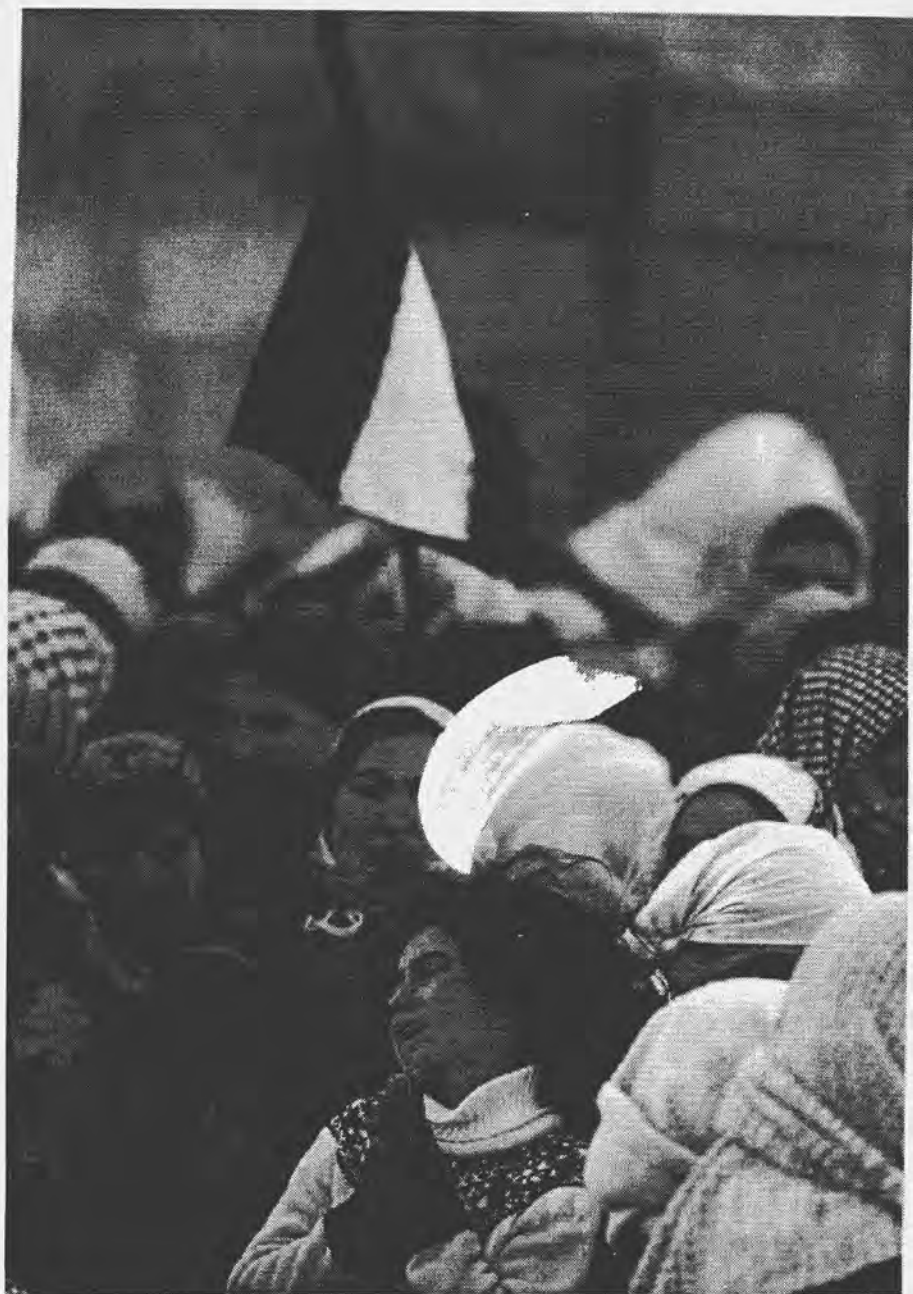
Solomon" by annexing Sinai, our ancestral property "which is not a part of Egypt", as well as to liberate the Egyptians and the whole world from the tyranny of Nasser, the entire Knesset, with the exception of four Communist MK's, got up and stood to attention to sing the Israeli national anthem. Only the threats of Khrushchev and of Eisenhower eventually convinced Ben-Gurion to reverse himself on this score. Yet Ben-Gurion was a realist and he ruled over the army with an iron fist.

Under the new conditions of "a vacuum [which] was created" by the demise of the USSR, and by the increasing vulnerability of the U.S., Israel clearly prepares itself to overtly seek a hegemony over the entire Middle East which it has always sought covertly, without hesitating to use for the purpose all means available, including the nuclear ones. Contrary to what Gazit, Shuval or other Israeli spokesmen say, however, this venture is not being undertaken for the sake of benefiting the West. It is because the West is comprised primarily of Gentiles, and Israel is a Jewish state whose sole purpose is to benefit the Jews alone. Israel's search for hegemony stems from its own time-honored ambitions, which now dictate its strategic aims.

(April 27, 1992)

Israel Shahak

* Dr. Israel Shahak, a Holocaust survivor and retired professor of chemistry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is chairman of the Israeli League of Human and Civil Rights.



George Azare

Linda Hamidah at her father's funeral:

"We were at a neighbor's house when we heard shooting. People said someone was injured, so I rushed to see what had happened. I found *Abui* ['my father'] on our doorstep. I saw him gasping for air. I wanted to go with him to the hospital. He had a bullet in his chest. I was in a state of shock, as though I wasn't conscious. I couldn't think... Then I fainted"



The demolition of this man's home was carried out as part of a collective punishment. Neither he nor any of his family was charged with any crime. The American taxpayer funded the destruction!

George Azare



THE PALESTINIANS MARGINALIZED

"The world has witnessed the tip of the iceberg of problems that we shall have to overcome in the implementation of even the first phase of the Declaration of Principles."

Those were the prophetically precise words of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, at the signing of the third Cairo accord, concluded between Israel and the PLO on May 4 of this year. More than one year after the signing of the Declaration of Principles, the two sides are still groping with the actual interpretation of their assigned new roles which, to the surprise of very few people, reflect the inescapable balance of power between the two sides on the ground. The former PLO, now widely referred to in the occupied territories as the Palestinian authority, has bravely attempted to portray its relationship with the Israeli government as equitable. However, the fact of the matter is that the Palestinian authority under this arrangement does not as much own the key to its own house; and it remains to be seen whether it can hold on to the house it thinks it owns.

Due to an agreement which fails to guarantee them even a minimum of their legitimate lifelong aspirations, now the Palestinian people find themselves rather trapped in an unenviable state of political Limbo, and their once-revolutionary leadership has traded its much-touted

liberation movement credentials with an astounding wilful submission to life under Israeli siege. In the meantime, while Arab governments continue to negotiate wholesale peace with Israel, the Palestinians have been conversely subjected to an exercise of political Darwinism, characterized mostly by piecemeal negotiations. This exercise has the unmistakable aim of taming the Palestinian spirit, while rendering the Palestinian people and their previous central political role quite marginal and inconsequential to Israel's overall strategic calculations for the Arab region. More poignantly, had it been only for his famed handshake with Rabin on the White House south lawn, Arafat would have stood little chance of winning the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize. Indeed, it was certainly his more valuable role as a principal facilitator and legitimizer of a sweeping Arab capitulation to Israel's political dictate--decisively accelerated by a wave of an all-encompassing pax Americana--that finally won Arafat the acknowledgment he has long sought from the west. Now that the Arab opening to Israel in the political and economic spheres is under way, Arafat is increasingly finding his initial role as best man for the wider Arab-Israeli rapprochement becoming rather irrelevant and somewhat superfluous.

Mindful of the inevitability of Israeli-Syrian peace, particularly in light of the recent Israeli-Jordanian treaty that gives Jordan a promised special role in the control and management of Islamic sites in Arab Jerusalem, Arafat is left to bemoan the lack of Arab solidarity in the face of Israel's heavy-handed approach in its negotiations with the Palestinians. Arafat's soleful complaint would be almost laughable were it not so tragic. Need he be reminded of the fact that he is the one who contributed the most to the final breach of whatever cohesion was left in the Arab posture during Arab-Israeli negotiations in Washington? Without a doubt, it was he who made it both possible and inevitable for the lengthy Jordanian-Israeli courtship to conclude with the figurative tying of the knot, recently witnessed and presided over by President

Clinton on the Israeli Jordanian borders. The PLO-Israel agreement, which has left the Palestinians more exposed and weakened than ever, has managed to produce yet a few more ironies in the process.

First, the accords primarily address the fate of the Palestinian people currently living in the occupied territories, and deal with diaspora Palestinians--who represent roughly two-thirds of the whole Palestinian population--altogether perfunctorily, in fact almost as an afterthought. This perilous development represents quite a departure for a movement that has staked its entire philosophy, even existence, on the twin principles of the Palestinian people's widely-recognized right of return and their inalienable right to self-determination. As if the current fragmentation of the Palestinians along ideological and political lines were not enough, the accords provide the dubious contribution of further segmenting the Palestinians, geographically this time, into those who live in the West Bank and Gaza and those who do not. Underlining this new distinction is the notably feeble argument that, given the reality of the situation on the ground, Palestinians under occupation have the most to lose, and, hence, their concerns must assume political primacy in the PLO-Israel negotiations at this juncture.

This argument would be almost defensible had it not been for the absence in the accords of any specific and unambiguous context for dealing with the forty-six-year old refugee problem. Other than an inelaborate and noncommittal reference to the intention of tackling the fate of 1948 Palestinian refugees during negotiations over the final status, the Palestinian-Israeli accords concern themselves merely with the 'administrative' fate of those Palestinians who are now under Israeli occupation. The irony in this situation is that the PLO had fiercely objected to having a Palestinian delegation to the peace talks made up entirely of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, mainly on the pretext that only the PLO could adequately and effectively represent the interests of all Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories. Soon after the accords were

made public, however, it became obvious that the Palestinian team leading the negotiations in Washington was unalterably more in tune with the concerns of all Palestinians than was the PLO team of negotiators in Oslo, which, as a matter of fact, operated in utter secrecy so as to avoid the necessary public scrutiny to which the Palestinian negotiators in Washington were subjected on a regular basis.

Second, for decades the Palestinians incessantly attempted to gain universal support for their grievances against Israel by appealing to the U.S. government and public opinion. Cognizant of the fact that the U. S. was consistently Israel's principal military and economic backer at least since 1967, the Palestinians nonetheless tried --without much success-- to establish official contacts with the U.S. Along these lines, they proceeded to build coalitions (mainly with progressive political groups and religious organizations), with an eye toward creating more U.S. awareness of and sympathy for their cause--and in the hope of prodding the American administration to play a more constructive political role in addressing their plight. Surely well-intentioned, the Palestinian effort, however, was quite modest by American standards, and thus had very little political impact on the U.S. administration's domestic and foreign policy considerations. Now that the Palestinian leadership has clearly succumbed to an Israeli-dictated vision of peace, the Palestinians are incredulously dismayed to discover that the price for opening a channel to the American administration would be their total and unconditional alignment with Israel's political designs. To their chagrin, they have concluded that the shortest road to Washington must go through Tel Aviv. Consequently, instead of getting their long-awaited Israeli legitimation card through Washington, the Palestinians found out that--in a definite role reversal of sorts--the American government had been acting more like a satellite of Israel's in its dealings with the PLO. Once the Israeli government, for its own good reasons, decreed that it was acceptable and prudent to do business with the PLO,

the U. S. administration then was more than happy to follow suit.

Third, the U.S.--which all along had Israel's best interests at heart during the Washington peace talks, despite the nearly comical label of 'honest broker' it had bestowed upon its role in those negotiations--turned out to be too pro-Israel even for Israel's own taste. Therefore American Pledges to the Palestinian side that the U.S. would be a 'full partner' in the talks came frighteningly close to reality, as the U. S. administration never failed to support the Israeli position at every impasse encountered by the two negotiating parties. Even under these extremely unfavorable conditions, the Palestinian negotiating team, headed by Haider Abdelshafi, stubbornly persevered and refused to yield. Ironically, it was the Israeli officials who finally decided that the U.S. role was too partisan to serve Israel's interests well, and thus moved ahead of the U.S. administration by recognizing the PLO as their only Palestinian interlocutor.

Fourth, Palestinians are fully aware that it took Israel only six days to sweep through the West Bank and Gaza, that is, in addition to Sinai and the Golan heights. And, after twenty-seven years of ironfisted Israeli occupation, the Palestinians are being subjected to a long list of humiliating Israeli demands, in return for a partial Israeli deployment within a portion of the 1967 occupied Palestinian lands. In the meantime, while providing no clear agenda for the extent or duration of its hoped-for eventual withdrawal, one of the main reasons trumpeted by the Israeli government to justify not surrendering the West Bank and Gaza to the Palestinians is that Israel cannot well handle the shock of having to relinquish those territories so abruptly.

Fifth, it seems rather interesting that the rich Arab Gulf states, which were essentially attempting to starve the Palestinians in the occupied territories into submission following the Gulf war, have now pledged financial support for the Palestinian authority after Arafat has capitulated to the

Israeli political will. There is no denying of course that the Gulf states have been firmly coaxed into this stance mainly through U.S. pressure. The fact remains, however, that the contradictory positions of these states--before and after the war--merely serve to highlight the not-so-secret contrast between these regimes' declared and undeclared positions with regard to Palestinian rights.

Sixth, since the Madrid conference at the end of 1991, the PLO had sounded repeated warnings over impending separate Arab-Israeli peace, *à la* Sadat. To everyone's surprise, it turns out now that the PLO's fears were fairly unwarranted; not only that, but the first party to break Arab ranks was the PLO itself, leaving both Jordan and Syria feeling very embittered and betrayed. Now that Jordan has signed its own deal with Israel, and Syria cannot be left behind for long, the PLO's laments and protests over the Arab governments' moving too fast in their peace overtures to Israel must surely sound more hollow than ever.

This last irony helps underline the PLO leadership's arrogance toward its Arab negotiating partners, as well as its lack of accountability to its own people. The PLO has always believed and acted as though it had the right to exercise a veto power over the Arab states' peace moves toward Israel, while at the same time permitting itself the luxury of breaking its own repeated pledges to these states not to be the first party--since Sadat--to split Arab ranks in that regard. Further compounding this dynamic is the unfortunate reality that the PLO has always lacked a true system of accountability toward its own people, a system designed to make its leaders pay for their costly mistakes and miscalculations on the Palestinian and Arab levels. As a result, decisions have been often taken in a thoroughly haphazard manner, while shameless and lame justifications merely followed after-the-fact analyses of these decisions.

Such is the case with the latest-and potentially greatest--Palestinian blunder, the Oslo accord. Now that the

PLO realizes the many limitations and inconsistencies of this deeply-flawed formula, the Palestinian people are being asked to close ranks behind their leadership, as if saving the unaccountable leadership was the ultimate goal; if anything is worth saving, indeed, certainly it is Palestinian rights. Sadly, these rights are being sacrificed and compromised daily, within the context of an agreement which has had the effect of legitimizing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and dangerously supplanting a whole set of U.N. resolutions predicated on international legitimacy and consensus, all in the name of not wanting to prejudice the outcome of ongoing negotiations. Emboldened by the new compromising position in which the PLO has found itself after moving to Gaza, the Israeli and U.S. governments have been actively seeking a repeal of U.N. resolutions critical of Israel and supportive of Palestinian rights. This process of historical re-engineering would sound fairly far-fetched had it been entirely without a precedent. Following the dramatic retooling of powers in the Arab region in the aftermath of the Gulf war, the Bush administration—in a bid to prove its pro-Israel credentials before the 1992 U.S. presidential elections—successfully championed the repeal of the 1975 U.N. resolution labeling Zionism a form of racism. Now that the Israeli government is linking every political move in its negotiations with the Palestinians to how malleable the PLO proves to be in acceding to Israeli demands of safeguarding Israeli interests, the question arises as to how resistant the PLO can be to such unremitting pressures, especially now when its continued political survival seems to rely mainly on such prerequisite compliance.

The reality is that the PLO under Arafat has once again tragically miscalculated both the Palestinian mood and Israeli intentions. To insure his own political survival, Arafat has settled for short-term political gain (i.e., Israeli recognition of the PLO) and vague promises of future Israeli concessions, which will be contingent upon Israel's determination of his good conduct. The sad truth is that Arafat, as a free man, was

not able to achieve for the Palestinians even a fraction of what Nelson Mandela in his prison cell was able to accomplish for his own people. Allowing for certain pronounced distinctions between the South African and Palestinian models, it is safe to say nonetheless that during his twenty-six years in prison, Mandela never wavered in his beliefs, never succumbed to the temptation of power, and never compromised on his vision for a new South Africa. In contrast, the new Palestine being fashioned in Gaza and Jericho nowadays is hardly the glorious vision which, over the past three decades, Arafat has promised his people. With sovereignty still firmly in the hands of the Israeli occupation army, the economy collapsing from under the Palestinians' feet, and the new Palestinian authority turning its guns against its own people, the present situation is indeed a nightmarish vision only the Israeli settlers could have wished on the Palestinians.

Now that the PLO-Israeli negotiations are hopelessly stalled and the Palestinians are more divided than ever, the PLO is reluctantly coming to the realization that, unlike Israel's disputes with Arab states, Israel in fact has little--if any--political, military, or economic incentive to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians. Thanks mainly to Arafat's separate peace, the Arab regimes now feel free to go it alone, and the Palestinians' worst fear of marginalization and fragmentation is becoming more of a reality with every passing day. The Palestinians are all too aware of Israel's attempts to divide and conquer Palestinian society on the basis of ideological, religious, and geographic delineations. Current Israeli policy, for instance, dictates that the more threatening ideology in the occupied territories is that of the Islamic revivalist movement; hence the Israeli government's decision to recognize the PLO last year and to transform it overnight into its only viable negotiating partner.

As is widely known at this point, this is contrary to Israeli policy in the 1980's, when the Israeli government perceived the Palestinian secular nationalist movement, led by the PLO, to

represent the greatest threat to its occupation, and thus deported, jailed, and liquidated many of the PLO's followers and supporters in the occupied territories. Although Israel's political priorities have obviously been rearranged since then, the old Israeli game of divide and conquer has remained the same, except of course for the changing roles of Palestinian actors now playing Israel's new political favorites. Like all other past occupations, which applied this old technique to near perfection, the Israeli occupation is proving that--when it chooses to--it too can be a selective, rather than an equal-opportunity, oppressor.

The cumulative corrosive effect of this baneful process has resulted in the Palestinian people distinctly feeling that their leadership is being gradually dismantled and dangerously co-opted. And without the necessary mechanism to enforce accountability on the leadership, particularly in light of the ever-growing inconsistency between the leaders' words and deeds, the Palestinian people must soon deal with the inherent dilemma that a recognition of the PLO under its present structure--is not at an tantamount to a recognition of Palestinian rights per se. Once this essential distinction between the two is earnestly made, the tautological inference from that would be the equally important distinction between leaders and causes. Palestinian rights are too important an issue to be dependent on individual leaders, especially when those leaders' only achievement so far is the segmentation of their people and the marginalization of their cause. Having given away the Palestinian trump card--the intifada and Palestinian recognition of Israel--in return for a blindingly short-sighted agreement that guarantees mostly Palestinian marginalization at all levels, Arafat has managed to squander whatever was left of the reservoir of good will and support which the Palestinians used to enjoy in the Arab world and around the globe.

More importantly, without much backing from its own people, the PLO under Arafat has certainly lost its political compass as well as its moral underpinnings. The tragic situation

of the Palestinian people, tormented by an incompetent leadership, and always getting far less than they expect or deserve, is aptly summed up in the words of the fictitious title character in Yousef Sharuni's *Glimpses from the Life of Maugoud Abdul Maugoud*: " [I have realized] that which I desire I do not achieve; and that which I achieve, I do not desire; and that between the desire that is not achieved and the achievement that is not desired falls my existence."

Khalil Barhoum

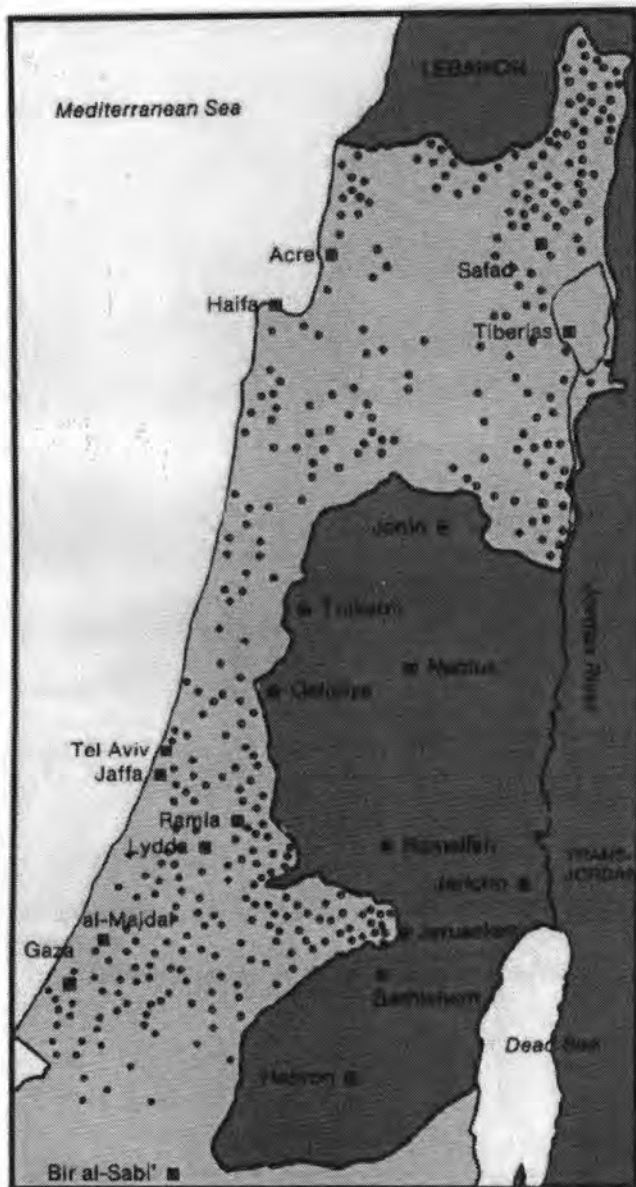
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Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora*

Throwing the Palestinians into the sea, the Israeli Policy since 1948
Port of Jaffa, Late April 1948



Based on: *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949*, Benny Morris, 1987.

Nancy Murray, *Palestinians, Life under Occupation*

369 villages depopulated or destroyed by Israel in 1948



ON THE QUESTION OF THE ARAB MINORITY IN ISRAEL

I

From both the historical and theoretical perspectives, the Arabs in Israel are part of the Palestinian Arab people. Their distinctness as "Arabs in Israel" emerged concurrently with the question of the Palestinian refugees and the establishment of the State of Israel on the catastrophe of the Palestinian people. Thus the starting point for the history of the Palestinians inside Israel is the same as that for the history of the Palestinians outside Israel. It is impossible to point to a nation or ethnic group called "Israeli Arabs" or "Arabs in Israel." The prehistory of the Arabs in Israel is Palestinian history, and any reproduction of their existence as Arabs in Israel is related to the reproduction and re-creation of the Palestinian question. What differentiates them from the other Palestinians is that their milieu has been moved to the margins of Israeli society, as a minority within the state of the Jews, as citizens in a state which they did not select and which did not choose them, to put it mildly - a state that, by its own definition is not their state, neither *de facto* nor *de jure*.

Despite this link, the resolution of the Palestinian national question by a historic compromise will not necessarily entail a solution to the question of the Arabs in Israel, especially since this question has not yet even been formulated. A compromise solution of the Palestinian national issue, based on the two-state

model, still seems remote today. But this compromise, which is a precondition for a solution to the question of Arabs in Israel, does not include that solution. On the other hand, any other solution not based on a historic compromise returns the Palestinians in Israel to the prehistoric situation, that is, to their purely Palestinian existence. The only alternative to a two-state solution would be a binational state, since there one could no longer speak of an Arab minority in Israel. Mere "Israelization" is not a real option for the Arabs in Israel, for two reasons: First, it does not solve the Palestinian problem. Second, Israel is not the state of the Israelis but the state of the Jews. Hence Israelization of the Arabs in Israel means their perpetual relegation to the sidelines of the Jewish state.

The Palestinian policy of both the left and right streams of the Israeli establishment can be reduced to two doctrines. The first is very simple. It holds that there is no Palestinian national issue but only an Arab-Israeli conflict, of which the Palestinian question is a side-effect or even a tool for manipulation. This doctrine worked well until the October, 1973, war. Since then, and more precisely since the Camp David accords, the second and more complex doctrine, which is closer to the prevailing situation if not to the truth, has predominated: there is a Palestinian issue, but it is not central to the region or to the conflict between Israel and the Arab world. (I, of course, would term the conflict as being between Israel and the Arabs and between the Jews and the Palestinians).

After the Gulf War, the Israeli establishment concluded that the war had substantiated the second doctrine, namely, that it is possible to put together a coalition of Arab states against an Arab state, a coalition with the United States and indirectly with Israel, without a prior resolution of the Palestinian question. This means that the Palestinian national question is not paramount. The chain of conclusions did not end here. The Israeli and American establishment also concluded that the time was ripe to switch to the first doctrine, that is, that there is no Palestinian national question. But they did not stop even here.

Their conclusion was embellished with a revolutionary historical character: there is no Palestinian national question, but there are questions involving Palestinian minorities, each to be resolved in isolation from the others. This conclusion and the process that accompanies it, known as the "peace process," I would rather denominate the "Kurdization" of the Palestinian national question, that is, turning it into a set of questions about national minorities in various countries. In general, since the Gulf War we have witnessed an attempt to ignore the Palestinian national question or, alternatively, to break it down into separate questions of national minorities. This attempt will strengthen even further the interest in the Palestinian national minority in Israel.

The Palestinian citizens of Israel live in a state that proclaims that it is not their state. This situation is familiar from other cases of ethnic republicanism willing to tolerate national minorities and extend liberal rights to them only on a personal, and not collective, basis only. In addition, however, the state of Israel proclaims itself the country of many persons who are not its citizens. This is not a common phenomenon and may even be unique in history, with the exception of the German Federal Republic before the unification of Germany. But West Germany never declared itself the state of the Protestants. In the case of Israel, where to the non separation of religion and state there is superadded a non separation of religion and nationality, we are dealing with a nation/religion state that has not made its peace with its own processes of secularization, and had no intention of doing so. In this light the state will continue to be preoccupied by the question of "who is a Jew," not "who is an Israeli."

Hence the Palestinian citizens of Israel are citizens of a state that arose on the ruins of their people and proclaims itself to be not their state and concurrently declares itself the state of many persons who are not its citizens. If this were not enough, they are also part of the people whom this state is expelling from its land and culture and whose economy it is enslaving, while

attempting to deal in isolation with its national question in the occupied territories. The many contradictions embrace every aspect of the life of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. I do not believe unlike the conventional assertion of Israeli sociology about the dual identity of the Arabs in Israel - that in the case of the Palestinian minority there can be a duality which is not a contradiction. Palestinianism and Israelism are conflicting aspects and cannot live peacefully alongside each other, as long as there is no progress towards a historic compromise each side will continue to develop at the expense of the other, instead of developing in tandem and benefiting from cross-fertilization.

II

A subjective contradiction of this sort, that is, a contradiction at the very core of identity, would seem to be the ideal arena for dialectics as a research method. In practice, sociological studies on the Arabs in Israel have tended to deal with only aspect of the conflict: Rosenfeld (19??) emphasized the process of forced Israelization-modernization, while Rekhes (19??) stressed the process of modernization-radicalization. The last decade has seen progress and even a revolution in the study of the Arab population of Israel, in the work of Sami Samuha and his Jewish and Arab students. These tend to see the duality of identity, or even the contradiction, not merely as an obstacle or negation, but as the very substance of the issue, the factor that can make research fruitful (Samuha). Despite this progress, I believe that sociological studies of the Arabs in Israel still lack two elements:

1. No sociology has emerged with a Palestinian perspective, that is, sociology that goes beyond orientalist anthropology. Of course, there are also Palestinian scholars who have continued to write the story of Arabs in Israel as part of the tragedy, i.e., history, of the Palestinians. They focused on the other side of the contradiction., Their achievement lies in their ability to point to the continuity between the Arab entity in Israel and Palestinian history and to detail

phenomena of ethnic discrimination in Israel. But they do not offer a sociological discourse that relates to the uniqueness of the Arabs in Israel from a Palestinian point of view.

2. The various studies generally deal with the political aspect and in particular with the "political behavior" of the Arabs in Israel, as manifested before and after Knesset and local-authority elections. The issue of identity is thereby associated with political behavior, and vice versa. Recently there have been signs of an effort to study the socio-economic condition of the Arabs in Israel. The most prominent pioneer in this direction is Rosenfeld, but the topic has also drawn the attention of Arab scholars. The importance of these studies is that they set the dual identity on its own feet and unveil its material side in the socio-economic reality. The duality of identity or of political behavior is no longer depicted as a type of emotional crisis, but, and chiefly, as a real gulf.

Even though at first sight there seems to be an obsessive preoccupation with the issue of the Arabs in Israel, especially among Arab scholars (who ought to be encouraged to deal with something besides themselves), I do not know any Arab scholar from Israel whose field is Israeli society, the Arab world, or the West. The seminar papers and doctoral dissertations of Arab students at Israeli universities usually focus on some facet of the issue of Arabs in Israel. Nevertheless, I believe there is a need to encourage and continue such studies, especially as relating to the socio-economic situation. Of course great benefit can be derived from the research work that has been done in Israeli universities; but it must not be forgotten even for a moment that the universities are part of the existing power structure in the country, from the perspective both of budgetary and organizational ties and of intellectual hegemony. University based studies about the Arabs in Israel serve different goals than those of critical theory, and its objectives, too, require a different research orientation. Ultimately, the goal of university

research is to develop models for explaining and predicting the political behavior of the Arab population, as part of the mechanisms of monitoring and control. One byproduct of this process is monitoring and control of the scholars who approach this topic with non-establishment motivations; another is the creation of crumbs of information that can be used by those who fight against the monitoring and control in order to change the current situation. To this end we must overcome any sense of inferiority toward university research, a sense that was based -- *inter alia* -- on awareness of the gap between the political action methods of the various currents in the Arab world and the sophistication characteristic of the corresponding methods of the Israeli establishment. This disparity was embodied in culture shock in the wake of the 1967 war, perceived as the defeat of backwardness by modernization.

There is a tendency among Arab- intellectuals to view scholarly research as a potential source of salvation from all of the defeats; this view has led to the belated sprouting of an "enlightenment" movement that sees the sciences and education as objective instruments for guaranteeing progress and bringing happiness. Such a position ignores the vast achievements of human thought in the present century, thought that locates science, from both the sociological and epistemological perspectives, within the ruling power structures: there is no neutral sociology or social science. For more than a decade now the Arabs in Israel, and especially the intelligentsia among them, have been undergoing a process of enlightenment, but without the values of the enlightenment. In this they are no different from other Third-World groups, who are importing and adopting scientific and educational methods to reform a social milieu dominated by particularistic values of provinciality and fundamentalism. Given the vacuum on the political map, produced by the crisis of Stalinism and the crisis of Arab nationalism, many Arab intellectuals could constitute a true intellectual avant-garde. But they evince a tendency to sequester themselves in closed ideological circles that are more

occupied with backbiting than with research. An intellectual avant-garde cannot evolve out of a flight from political activity. Turning one's back on the true challenges presented by reality produces boors who deal with will-o'-the-wisps. In general I would ridicule the Orientalist vein, bordering on racism, that uses the Hebrew word *maskil*, with its connotation of having seen the light and acquired an education, for Arabs, while reserving the more-prestigious Anglicism *intelektual* for Jews. The problem is that, like all Orientalisms, this argument has a hint of truth. Our numbers do not include intellectuals with broad horizons, who react to political and cultural challenges in the Middle East and throughout the world. Rather, we have educated scholars who specialize in certain processes in the "Arab village" ("Arab village" is itself an Orientalist code word), or university graduates with diplomas. The fact is that there is a void that should be filled by an intellectual avant-garde. This requires the bravery and fortitude, and intense labor associated with both academic research and , but also political activity based on critical ethical decisions and a willingness to learn about our people and culture as well as and about other peoples and cultures.

III

The state of Israel was established on the basis of the partition resolution, which stipulated, *inter alia*, that each of the two states would guarantee equality in civil, political, economic, and religious matters. It also stipulated that basic human rights would be guaranteed, including freedom of religion, language, publication, and education. Israel's first application for admission to the United Nations was rejected because of the opposition of the Arab delegations, basing themselves *inter alia* on the new state's treatment of the Arab minority that remained within its borders - then some 160,000 persons. Only later, in January, 1949, was it decided to permit Arab citizens to participate in Knesset elections.

After the Arabs in Israel had received the liberal rights of

citizenship, that is, permanent residency and suffrage, they began to develop a consciousness of discrimination that can hardly be defined as the consciousness of an ethnic minority. In that period there was no national leadership or national elite able to formulate for the Arabs in Israel a consciousness of being a national minority. The lion's share of the Palestinian elite, which had developed at the end of the Ottoman period and under the British mandate, was now living in the diaspora. They included the aristocracy, the middle class, the intellectuals, and the cultural elite, which had begun to organize themselves and establish political parties. What remained under Israeli rule was the periphery of Palestinian society in the Galilee and Little Triangle, a rural population whose contribution to the Palestinian national movement was its participation in the uprising of 1936-1939. The Palestinian cultural enterprise that had developed in the urban centers (Jerusalem, Haifa, Nablus, Acre, and Jaffa) was not their inheritance. This enterprise continued to develop after 1948, in the new context of the Palestinian diaspora, and was not encountered again until after the 1967 war.

It can certainly be argued that the Palestinian population in Israel after 1948 was the defeated remnant of a defeated society. This was manifested by its attitude towards itself and towards the Israeli military government. In that period it aspired chiefly for security (personal safety) and not for equality. "Appropriate" political behavior and a distorted attempt at "integration," that is, acceptance by the institutions of the state - the Knesset, the Histadrut, and the Mapai party (which in those days could hardly be distinguished from the state institutions) - were seen as guarantees of security. The result of this attempt to be accepted or integrated was not acceptance or integration; this aspect will be considered below. The major conduit for contacts between the regime and the population was the "General Security Services" or the internal intelligence service. This form of contact with the state has continued to accompany the Arabs in Israel until the present. It will always be there as part of a

more complex system of relations between the state and its Arab citizens, marking the foreignness of the Arabs in Israel and the suspicion and hostility that characterize these relations. This element remains a fixed datum, even though today the picture seems to be much more complex. It is reinforced in periods of intense political activity and manifested in discussions of the need for "appropriate supervision" of events in the Arab sector. In the period up to the abolition of the military government, in 1966, most of the ties between the Arab population and the state were through the General Security Services. The boundaries between the General Security Services, the Office of the Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs, the Arab Department in the Histadrut, and those responsible for liaison with the Arab parties that operated as satellites of Mapai were rather blurred. This period also left its cultural imprints and even spawned an Arab-Israeli folklore, including jokes, tales, and even popular songs describing relations with the General Security Services agent responsible for the village and with the military governor.

Those years also shaped the unique structure of the Arab village. As a result of the processes of accelerated modernization, land expropriations, and proletarianization of the labour-force without accompanying industrialization, the village became a source of labor and not a source of employment. It became a bedroom community with no labor market. The village became an intimate refuge where one could return to the bosom of close social relations, the concrete homeland of strangers in their homeland. The attitude of the security forces to the village helped preserve and freeze of the extended family and social hierarchy, because it provided the clan leaders, who had lost their source of power in the production relations of oriental feudalism, with an alternative source of power. His role as the mediator between the population and the authorities is the new power source of the *mukhtar* or clan representative who had lost his previous power base as a result of the accelerated proletarianization. Despite the

far-reaching structural changes that took place in the clan structure, too, and despite the fact that educated young people took over the foci of power and leadership, their role, by its very essence, remained mediation with the central authorities, for they were elected to local councils on clan or ethnic-affiliated lists. The Communist Party and Islamic Movement are exceptions to this rule of clan-affiliated party lists, on the level of local council elections as well, even though in some villages there is an overlap between one or two extended families and the local branch of the Communist Party.

Arab villagers experienced modernization even though the village itself never went through that process. This state of affairs began to change only recently, driven by the university-educated who returned to the village. Their number grew substantially, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, and they began to occupy positions in the village itself, especially in teaching, but also in other liberal professions -medicine, engineering, law, accounting, and the like . Economic initiatives in commerce, services, and medium-sized industry also started to develop on the local level, especially after 1967.

The period between 1948 and 1967 was one of isolation, but also the beginning of the coalescence and individuation of Arab society in Israel. The Arab population maintained its links with the larger Arab world through its radio sets tuned to *Saut al-arab*, broadcasting from Cairo. The unique behavioral pattern of the Arab citizens of Israel was minted then - walking on the tightrope between membership in the Arab nation and the feeling of weakness accompanied by the aspiration for security within the state of Israel. Even though most older Arabs voted for the Zionist parties, and even though their attitude towards the authorities was regulated by the law of fear, those same older Arabs identified with Nasser and the dreams of Arab unity and liberation from the yoke of imperialism that he enunciated. In that era, this identification with Nasser and with everything he symbolized was shared by all political currents, indicating that "cooperation" with the authorities was a

form of alienation and not of belonging.

In those years most of the Arab population lived under a military government; equality in the Jewish state was not taken for granted. Even the very act of staying on one's land, the right to work, to build a family, and to educate one's children were not taken for granted. To merit these one had to pay in the coin of "appropriate" political behavior. Precisely the struggle against discrimination expresses the desire for integration, because it relates seriously to citizenship. This struggle demands that the authorities meet the test of the Declaration of Independence; that is, it is an expression of the Israeliness of the Arab citizens. This line was put forward by the Israel Communist Party (Maki) and to a certain extent by Mapam, although the latter was felt to be unreliable because it was part of the Zionist establishment and regime and because of its hostility towards the Arab nation's desire for liberation in the Nasserite mode. In my opinion, the Israel Communist Party is the mother of the slogan of equality within the state of Israel and therefore also mother of the idea of integration in the state. It garnered a certain credibility because of the consistent anti-imperialist line that it represented, too. Back then the Maki was the only political party that evinced a positive attitude towards the struggle of the Arab peoples for liberation and social progress, despite the crises that gaped between the Communists and the Ba'ath and Nasserites, crises later papered over by "friendship with the Soviet Union."

The struggle of the Communist Party within the Arab sector was essentially a fight against discrimination, but it was not supplemented by a desire to produce a positive definition of equality. It was satisfied with a negative definition of equality as nondiscrimination, instead of a positive definition, namely, turning Israel into the state of all its citizens and not only of the Jews. From the birth of the state in 1948 until the end of the 1967 war, Maki supported the Law of Return and immigrant absorption. It even displayed hostility towards the incipient Palestinian national movement in the diaspora and towards

every national-based organization among Israeli Arabs, such as the *El-Ard* movement. At the same time, Maki consistently championed the struggle against ethnic discrimination. The process that took place within Maki exemplifies in miniature processes that took place later and on a larger scale among the Arab population as a whole. The Arab members of Maki experienced a process of accelerated modernization tantamount to simultaneous Israelization and Palestinization: their Israelization meant expanded awareness of civil rights, while their Palestinization was expressed in an accent on the national affiliation with the Palestinian people.

In the era when Maki was basing the main organizational patterns of Israeli Arabs on the struggle for equal civil rights (the negative definition of equality), a national -though not nationalistic - awakening occurred within its own ranks; this determined the mode of expression of the national affiliation with the Arab Palestinian people, in both language and in literature. For better and for worse, the source of the language used by all of the parties currently operating in the Arab sector is undoubtedly the newspapers *Al Ittihad*, *Al Ghad*, and *Al Jedid*. Maki began its activity in the Arab sector with young educated Arabs led by Jewish Stalinists from Eastern Europe, and wound up with an Arab Stalinist leadership that stood at the head of the entire Arab sector for a full decade (1975-1985) and lost out just when its slogans had become common property.

Maki truly and sincerely believed, at least until 1967, in the possibility of an Israeli people composed of Arabs and Jews; this was the source of its principled opposition to movements like *El-Ard*, and to the organization of Arab students in the late 1950s. It began to accept and even view kindly organization on a national basis only after it developed its own Arab leadership and, in the wake of 1967, was almost totally ousted from the Jewish sector.

Much has been written about the *El-Ard* case, and not just because Israeli academe has an almost obsessive inclination to study every phenomenon, no matter how minuscule, associated

with the political behavior of Israeli Arabs. The abundance of such writing attests that what is lacking is not research, but a new kind of theorizing, of the sort that cannot come from the university. The *El-Ard* movement has been perceived as first and foremost a legal case and studied chiefly from the perspective of constitutional law. The Supreme Court ruling that barred the movement from running for the Knesset, by leaving no distinction between recognition of the existence of the state of Israel and acceptance of its Jewish character, made it plain that there is no place for an Arab organization not based on recognition of Israel as the state of the Jews. This situation was repeated in the legal deliberations dealing with the Progressive List for Peace. *El-Ard* was not a mass movement: its true weight and organizational and ideological level fell far short of its importance as a legal test case. Nevertheless, one should not detract from the value of the affair in molding the consciousness of Arab intellectuals. Its path would be continued later by movements such as the Sons of the Village and the Progressive List, which can be seen as offshoots from the left and right wings, respectively, of the Arab national movement among the Palestinian population. These offshoots sprouted, of course, after 1967, that is, after the Arab national current became the Palestinian national current.

This process was part of the attempt by the Arabs in Israel to change from the remnants of a society to a society with its own distinct characteristics: true, not an autonomous society, but one that has undergone a process of class differentiation and has developed its own middle class and political and cultural elite. As this society evolved, every movement that emphasized only one aspect of its complex situation was shunted to the sidelines. The first to crumble were the Arab political lists affiliated with Mapai. They expressed both fear and social backwardness and left a blot in the collective memory. (Incidentally, one should note that members of these lists served as deputy ministers. In those days Arab intellectuals considered this an absurd position.) It should be noted that not only political movements

that emphasized only Israeliness, but also those that stressed only the Palestinian element of social being, were relegated to the sidelines. (I am intentionally not speaking of national identity, because I think that social being is much more complex than any unified image of national identity.)

Until 1967, Israeli Arabs could be divided into three main political streams: The first numbered those who were influenced by the Arab national movement and cooperated with the Arab Communists of Maki in the fight against discrimination, until the conflict between Nasser and the Communists and between the Ba'ath and the Communists was transplanted to the ranks working against discrimination among Israeli Arabs. The Arabs of Israel, living in an atmosphere of fear, could not identify with this stream because it was isolated and persecuted by the authorities and later also because it did not express the complexity of their life and aspirations.

The second political stream was the Communists belonging to Maki. The third stream comprised supporters of the Zionist parties and of the Arab lists affiliated with them. This stream represented chiefly the traditional forces in society; its political activity expressed the people's fear and longing for security. In practice, it is hard to call this third group a political stream, much less an ideological stream. We ought rather to relate to it as a societal current, that is, as social, clan, and communal forces associated with the authorities and especially with the Mapai party of that era. It was only later that a political stream sincerely associated with the Zionist parties developed, out of a pragmatic view and expressing the interests of Arab bureaucrats in government ministries and the Histadrut and of the Arab middle class. This rather new stream is composed chiefly of Labor Party supporters, but also supporters of Meretz and Mapam.

IV

The 1967 war is undoubtedly the most important event in the modern history of the region (except for the Second World

War). It stabilized the results of the 1948 war and made them irreversible, demonstrated Israel's importance to the West, and shattered the building of a modern Arab political and cultural project led by Egypt. The war provided the conservative forces with an advantage in their struggle against modern forces in the Arab world and totally altered the political map of the region. We are still living in the post 1967 war era. No regional political event nullifying the results of the war and whose name can be given to the age has occurred since then. Post-1967 Israel is no longer the same Israel, neither from the military and economic nor from the socio-political perspective. The post-1967 Arab world is not the same Arab world, either. Much has been written about culture shock, the shock of defeat, the decline of secular Arab nationalism and the rise of both the conservative and revolutionary currents of Islam in the aftermath of that war. Its influence on the Palestinian question was direct and intensive: '

1. The modern PLO , based on factions that believe in the armed struggle, was born.
- 2a. The history of the Palestinian national movement began its autonomous evolution, relatively independent of the Arab states, and was expressed in a demand for liberation that developed into a demand for sovereignty.
- 2b. The idea of relying on Arab unity failed; a process of Palestinian unity began. This was the origin of the intellectual current that held that the Palestinian people must bear the principal burden of its own liberation.
3. A large segment of the Palestinian people (more than one million persons) fell under direct Israeli occupation, something that had not occurred in 1948. This generated a direct confrontation between the Palestinians and Israel as an occupying power. Ultimately this state of affairs led to important changes in the Palestinian political program and also in the structure of the Palestinian liberation movement.

The 1967 war marked a watershed also the history of the Arabs in Israel as well. In practice, that war created the history

of the Arabs in Israel, because it was the real beginning of their consolidation as a society that has a core around which it can unite. The Arabs in Israel were influenced by their direct encounter with the Palestinians of the territories as well as by the changes that took place in Israeli society as a result of its rule over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The fact that the Arabs in Israel were so profoundly influenced by the changes in Israeli society shows the extent to which Arab society in Israel is linked to Israeli society. Those who express fears that the Arabs of Galilee and Triangle might get "mixed up" with the segment of the Palestinian people that lives under direct Israeli occupation either does not know what they are talking about or really wants them to do so. Only two types eventualities could unite the destiny of these two parts of the Palestinian people: Israeli annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, that is, turning the occupation into *de jure*, and not only *de facto*, apartheid; or extending equal rights to the inhabitants of the territories, that is, converting Israel into a secular democratic or binational state.

The encounter with the West Bank and Gaza Strip exposed what is "other" about the Arabs of Israel and accelerated the revelation of the same and the different. The encounter disclosed what they have in common - culture, religion, family relations; but it also showed what distinguishes them - status and socio-economic position (in this context one can also speak of a cultural difference). The Arabs in Israel were cut off from the broader Arab culture, but were also insulated against the various regressions that took place in Arab societies in the 1960s, especially after 1967, such as the spread of political Islam.

The evolution of the phenomenon of political Islam in Arab society in Israel cannot be understood divorced from the encounter with the established and popular Islam of the occupied territories. There were always believing Muslims, and even a traditional Islamic climate, among the Arabs in Israel; but there was no autonomous Islamic establishment, no Islamic

colleges, and no Islamic political organizations.

The encounter with the territories was extremely important in other domains as well. Relations were soon woven with the national movement in the territories. The trailblazer in this process was the Communist Party, which took advantage of the fact that the Palestinian Communist Party led the national front in the territories during the 1970s. Even the prisons were a venue where political prisoners from the territories encountered criminals from Israel. But the main meeting place was of course the economic sphere, in the market, in labor relations. The Arabs of Israel certainly profited from these relations, as a result of their proximity to the centers of the Israeli economy and government. In addition, their knowledge of Hebrew and freedom of movement as citizens allowed them to play mediating roles between the territories and Israel. This function was particularly manifest in the first years of the *intifada*, when labor brokers (that is, worker contractors) who are Arab citizens of the state continued to frequent communities on the West Bank and Gaza Strip to collect workers, even when Jewish labor brokers did not dare do so. Nor were the products of the few Arab factories in Israel boycotted at the height of the boycott of Israeli manufactured goods.

This mediating function assumes interesting dimensions with Arab attorneys from Israel. A similar phenomenon is cultural mediation, in the person of all sorts of "Israeli Arab" (and leftist) directors who are shooting films on the *intifada*, for screening to Israeli audiences. In these films the occupied act for the benefit of the occupiers, with an Israeli Arab as mediating director, translator, and actor. This post-modern circle is closed at the Jerusalem Cinematheque, and all that remains of the occupation is the gala. "Israeli Arabs" are undoubtedly masters of the art of catering, but also master of acting, on the stage and in real life.

There was a rise in the economic status of the Arabs in Israel after 1967, chiefly because of the boom in the construction and services sector. Since then, and especially in the 1970s and

1980s, we have witnessed a process of social stratification reshaping the face of Arab society in Israel. Whereas before 1967 the lineaments of that society were determined by the process of proletarianization, the decisive process since then has been the consolidation of the middle class of entrepreneurs, liberal professionals, contractors, merchants, wholesale dealers, the development of medium-sized industry, and the like. In other words, an Arab bourgeoisie has emerged on the margins of the Israeli bourgeoisie; it has developed economic interests of a new sort - economic "ambitions," if you will that go beyond security and bare subsistence, but nevertheless aspires to exist in the framework of the Israeli economy. Politically, this new class began by building the foundations for an alliance with the Communists; later it split with the Communists and established new political movements. Today it follows two political strategies. One, which emphasizes the uniqueness of Arab society, is represented by parties like the Arab Democratic Party and the Progressive List. The second stresses integration; its support is given chiefly to the Labor Party. The two strategies are both very much "Israeli-Arabism," that is, opportunistic. This middle class also constitutes the foundation for a new variety of nationalism. In the past, society was divided into collaborators on one side and Communists and nationalists on the other. A process that began after 1967 led, in the 1980s, to the appearance of a stream that supported Zionist parties not in pursuit of security but as a response to their own interests, even while nurturing nationalist rhetoric. The basis of this stream is a class that is very much Israeli in its location and aspirations. The rhetoric of the Arab Democratic Party, whose founder spent some years in the Labor Party before breaking away to express Israeli Arab uniqueness and to stress his affiliation with the Palestinian people, is very different from the nationalism of *El-Ard* and the Sons of the Village. Walking on a tightrope has become dancing on a tightrope; of all the complexity of the situation, the rhetoric has left behind only the falsehood of real life.

V

The 1970s, especially after the 1973 war, saw a spurt in the establishment of national institutions by Arabs in Israel, including the National Union of Arab Students, the National Council of High-School Students, the Council to Defend Lands, and the Council of Local Authorities Heads. The intelligentsia, which began to explode numerically, began to organize. University graduates who returned to the village stressed their moral duty to influence political life there. There were many symposia and articles about the role of the intellectual in society during this period. If there was a strong branch of the Communist Party in the village, the general rule was to cooperate with it to influence local political life. Where such a branch did not exist, there was independent organization by the university graduates.

After the Democratic Front's victory in the Nazareth municipal elections of 1975, the Communist Party tried to disseminate this model throughout the Arab sector. Its success was limited, however, because there were no organized partners in the undeveloped villages, while in the developed villages potential partners refused to accept the role of satellites of the Communist Party. The Front is in fact the front of a single party cooperating with a number of organizations in which party members are active. In Nazareth these were organizations of the university-educated, merchants, and students. All the organizations were professional in nature, but they all formed an alliance with the Communist Party, whose members were active in the organizations themselves. The Front remained chiefly a front of party members and nonparty members rather than an organized framework for cooperation among different political or ideological streams. The nonparty elements were constituted in a different fashion each time. Sometimes they were members of an entire clan, and in another village an association of university graduates. In any case, the Front was nowhere more than a particular form of hegemony of the Communist Party. When other forces felt strong enough and

confident enough they split off and set up other organizations. This is how the Progressive List came into being, at the initiative of university graduates and merchants who split off from the Front in Nazareth in the early 1980s.

The new socio-political fabric led to the first case of confrontation with the authorities - Land Day, on March 30, 1976. The public associations entered a struggle that combined two elements of the conflict with the Israeli authorities, the civil element and the national element. From this perspective, the lands question is a classic issue that objectively merges both elements, even when there is no conscious attempt to bring them together. Land Day saw elements of civil rebellion: a general strike, demonstrations, and violent clashes with the security forces. The expropriation of land was meant to Judaize the Galilee, the bluntest expression of the state's treatment of its non-Jewish citizens as aliens and outsiders. The authorities reacted to this aspect of national organization and civil rebellion in an unequivocal fashion: This state is not your state and we will not tolerate any act of rebellion!

Land Day was the first and last act that united Israeli Arabs in nationalist and civil activity. This is the source of its latent strength. Political movements have been commemorating its symbols and anniversaries for a relatively long period. Both the authorities and the public organizations and political parties of the Arabs in Israel learned the lessons of this day, however, and it has not been repeated except in memory.

On that day the Arabs of Israel felt strong, but they were afraid of their strength. They were concerned about continued progress, and but they were moving one step backward: the public institutions became a self-standing goal. After Land Day a process of institutionalization began, and spawned new political movements and organizations and stabilized the old institutions. After Land Day, the Palestinian national movement (the PLO) began to direct some attention towards the Palestinian citizens of Israel: it began to weave direct political relations with the Arab population through international

conferences and organizations and through direct involvement in Knesset elections, declaring its support for Hadash and later for the Progressive List. By injecting money into foundations and public institutions abroad, the Palestinian national movement helped institutionalize the incipient protest movement among the Arabs in Israel. These funds furthered institutionalization within the context of Israeli law, that is, to Israelization. The rhetoric of the Palestinian press began to praise the Arabs in Israel, with all sorts of romanticism about "steadfastness on the soil" and "remaining in the homeland." This praise augmented the self-esteem of the Arabs in Israel out of all proportion to actual political activity after Land Day. Only a few of the political currents operating in the Arab sector, chiefly the Sons of the Village and part of the Progressive List, saw and see the association with the PLO as a strategic matter. All the others view it as a tool in the interest of institutionalization within the state of Israel. What is more, since this process began, that is, since the early 1970s, the PLO has adopted the program of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; as such, the Arabs in Israel have become a "democratic auxiliary in Israeli society."

Since Land Day in 1976, the Arab population has undergone a transition in everything relating to the institutionalization of its public organs: instead of a national civilian protest movement, local and nationwide bodies based on local representation have come to the fore. In the late 1980s, Rakah's hegemony gave way to an equilibrium of sorts among the various political streams, including those who support Zionist parties. The Higher Steering Committee, which bring together many public bodies, numbers Arab members of Knesset, including those who represent Zionist parties, in its ranks. They are no longer seen as collaborators but as representing one political currents within the Arab population. From the moment it came into being, the new establishment found itself beset by the crisis known today as the "crisis of Arab political activity." This crisis emerged into the light and became a public matter

only after the period of the political "consumption" of Land Day had passed and after active identification with the first phase of the *intifada* had died down.

The *intifada* cast light on the difference between Palestinians in Israel and Palestinians in the occupied territories. When, however, it became necessary to define the distinguishing characteristics, it became clear that aside for the argument that an *intifada* is out of place in the Galilee and Triangle, the political forces operating among the Arabs have no political strategy worthy of the name. The balance, rather than being viewed as a limitation, as a strategic deficiency, became itself the strategy. For a number of years, internal struggles had preoccupied the Arab population, until Maki's monopoly was shattered. Then, however, it became clear that the new political forces have nothing new to say, except for the familiar message of "two states and equality," which unites all the political forces active in the Arab sector today. This message, that is, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and equality for Arab citizens in Israel, is championed by the Arab members of Zionist parties, too. But none among these political forces dares define what is meant when he or she speaks of equality. Paradoxically, this situation legitimized voting for Zionist parties in the recent elections for the Thirteenth Knesset. If the platform of a political movement can be reduced to "two states for two peoples" and "equality for Arabs in Israel," and if this plank is advanced by the Arab members of Zionist parties as well, why not vote for the Zionist parties directly? The only difference between them is that the Arab members of Zionist parties have more influence and access to resources and can bring back spoils to their voters, for example, fatter budgets for local authorities or Arab education.

In practice, we find that this slogan, when not defined and clarified, serves one clear goal: detaching the national element from the civic element in political activity. The national element is cast beyond the Green Line, where it is supposed to be satisfied (the possibility that this will not happen is totally

disregarded). At the same time, the issue of the Arabs in Israel is defined as a civic matter. But the civic issue, too, is not defined in full and tends to be limited exclusively to budgetary demands. The struggle for equal budgets for local authorities is led by the local council heads, spawning a leadership in its own image. The conscious detachment from the national question leaves behind only a caricature of the civic struggle.

For the Arabs in Israel, however, the civic issue is part of the national question and does not stand on its own legs. Without the national dimension, the budgets issue concerns only council heads and cannot be a focus for political activity. It is not through emphasis on Palestinian roots or ties with the PLO (the strategy of the Progressive List) –that is, in an external fashion that reproduces this detachment – that the national element can enter the picture once again, but only internally; that is, only if the definition of citizenship taken all the way and the Arabs in Israel demand that the state be the state of all its citizens. This is a civil demand in every liberal sense of the word, but it is based on a question mark about the essence of the state. Israeli laws disqualifies an electoral list whose platform calls for equality in its positive aspect (that is, a positive definition as opposed to the negative definition of equality as nondiscrimination). Defining the concept of equality in a demand to turn the state into the state of all its citizens is a simple liberal definition and has absolutely nothing to do with left and right. In Israel, however, tasks considered appropriate to liberals in many parts of the world become the mission of the left.

The Israeli authorities, too, have learned from experience and modified their policy. Security policy vis-à-vis Arabs in Israel has indeed become more sophisticated and level-headed, as reflected in the establishment of new monitoring and control agencies that coordinate the activities of the various bodies: the police, the General Security Services, and so on. This sophistication evolved particularly during the first years of the *intifada*. There is no doubt, however, that policy tending towards complex discrimination took the place of sharp and

simple discrimination. This policy is manifested in the appointment of a minister for Arab affairs, in the special attention accorded to the problems of the Druze and Bedouin, and recently in the tendency to persuade young Christians to volunteer for the army. There is a tendency to conduct a dialogue with the Committee of Local Council Heads, but without recognizing it officially: that is, prevent it from developing into a national leadership, on the one hand, while simultaneously preventing it from organizing as an autonomous body recognized by the authorities.

Most important is that there is now explicit acknowledgment of the problems and discrimination. As a result, the empty disputes about the facts has been swept away; their recognition leads to a segmentation based on political opinions. Recognition of discrimination leads to a number of responses: one legitimizes discrimination, because this is the state of the Jews; another calls for elimination of discrimination. Meanwhile there can exist - and for a relatively long period - interim options able to palliate the discrimination on the individual (but not the collective) level, thanks to mobility fueled by economic initiative and professional excellence. These are the options that the new Arab intelligentsia encourages with the blessing of the authorities; their meaning is depoliticization. There is nothing wrong with excellence or entrepreneurship (this is the new word) as an individual option; when such an option is proposed to the Arabs as an entire community, however, it leads not only to depoliticization, with all its negative side-effects, but also to the evolution of a new breed of Arabs who accept being relegation to the margins of society as a condition for "individual success." The bearers of these values are a particular type of person that has been developing in the Arab sector in recent years and cannot indicate the future of this society. Integration on an individual basis is spurious integration, requiring the concession of collective identity and making the mask into the face itself. as a collective and cultural option is not and cannot be proposed -

not only because we do not live in an integrated society based on the values of the enlightenment and dedicated to the establishment of a nation on the basis of citizenship or civil affiliation, and not only because the history of the present century has shown that political integration is an option only as a cultural pluralism guaranteeing equality between cultures. The key is that we are living in a state of the worst type of ethnic republicanism. Israelization as a cultural and political option means being shunted to the sidelines, that is, decreeing that you will live without an identity, on the margins of a society that turns religious conversion or security-oriented patriotism into criteria for membership in the collective.

The depoliticization of the approach to the sociopolitical reality and the crisis of political activity among the Arabs in Israel entail a crisis of identity accompanied by moral disintegration. The Arab intelligentsia has not disseminated any moral authority that sketches out a path to this society. In such circumstances, the Islamic movement has assumed a classic role, expressing a reaction to cultural anomaly and crisis of identity. The Islamic movement does not propose an alternative that comes to grips with reality; instead, it proposes to turn its back on reality. However strange it may seem, there is no doubt that political Islam includes a strong element of depoliticization in its attitude towards reality and the state.

Of late the depoliticization of reality has been taking place in many sectors. Arab education is preoccupied with dialogue and Jewish-Arab coexistence, which lead to depoliticization of reality by turning politics into a species of group dynamics involving Jewish and Arab students and teachers. At the same time, a new type of organization and institution is spreading, with the goal of lobbying the government to pay more attention to matters of concern to the Arab sector. Their main idea is that the root of the problem is executive-branch negligence or dereliction and not the basic political axioms. These phenomena are a symptom of a political crisis and not a solution to it. The political crisis can be solved through political means, though,

through a new program and new forces. This must take place in the near future, before it is too late, before this society has become totally marginalized, before the model of the Arabs of Lod and Ramle becomes the reality of all the Arabs in Israel.

VI

The question of the recognition of the Arabs of Israel as a national minority was raised after Land Day . As is known, the Israeli authorities grant no collective rights to Arabs. Rights are extended only on the basis of religious affiliation; in the case of the Islamic community, not even this exists without supervision and intervention by the authorities (for example, with regard to the Islamic *Waqf* and the appointment of *qadis*). In any case, the authorities in Israel speak officially of minorities, and not of an Arab national minority. The Israeli authorities categorically rejected the demand for recognition of the Arabs in Israel as a national minority, but it continued to be mooted by various political circles. The Communist Party, for example, began to speak of daily (civil) rights and of national rights. Except for the fact that the two concepts are not successful, there was no attempt (consciously, I believe) to define the term "national rights" with regard to the Arabs in Israel. The Progressive List recently adopted a plank calling for recognition of the Arabs in Israel as a national minority, but did not explain what this means.

Recognition of the Arab minority in Israel as a national minority means recognizing its rights as a collective, that is, recognizing its right to manage its own cultural affairs. "Autonomy" is generally a concept intended to represent affairs of national minorities who have received citizenship but have no national expression in a state. Autonomy is a "privilege" that goes beyond civil equality and is not intended to fill the void left by its absence. Autonomy should be established on the presence of equal civil rights . In the case of the Arabs in Israel, the native population has already made a historic concession of its homeland. Autonomy would therefore be a historic

compromise with and for the autochthonous citizens of the state. It would not impinge upon their civil rights and links to the central government. Nor would it have a territorial basis (there are mixed cities and the population is scattered), but a personal basis.

The situation is totally different with regard to the occupied territories; where the model of autonomy was suggested by the Likkud government in the Camp David accord as a substitute for sovereignty. Autonomy is no substitute for sovereignty. A self-governing authority can be understood as representing a gradual transition of authority to a people under occupation. This process has not been very common throughout history; in order for it to exist, however, there must be consent by both occupiers and the occupied that the goal does envisage a transition to sovereignty or declare this to be a possibility, at least in the remote future. In Israel's case the state denies any such possibility; The occupying power is offering the autonomy of national minorities of citizens to an occupied people of noncitizens. Such an autonomy has an address: the Arab national minority in Israel. This difference must be put forward not only because of the option it offers to the Arabs in Israel, but also because it clarifies the options in the occupied territories and actively promotes the struggle against the occupation in a way that goes beyond passive solidarity. It is impossible to develop a detailed model of autonomy in a single article. My intention is to present the basic options. I am not a great believer in the development of complete theoretical models and the attempt to impose them on the variegations of reality. In my opinion, the model must be developed gradually and set forth in detail by the forces and elites that demand it. There is no need to advance a detailed model in advance. It is necessary to put forward the option and begin to flesh it out, so that it may become increasingly complex over time. But the principal point is already established :autonomy is neither an alternative for equality in Israel nor is it a substitute for sovereignty of the Palestinians .

The rationalist and secular-humanist circles must not leave the cultural option of a national minority in the hands of the religious forces or of political religion. Today there are two cultural options that reflect a crisis: cultural marginalization of Arab society, accompanied by individual integration on the fringes of Israeli society; and a reaction to marginalization expressed by turning one's back and cultural isolation, in the form of religious fundamentalism.

As intellectuals we must offer a third option, a cultural-political option that believes in values such as equality, freedom, and social justice, in Jewish-Arab cooperation based on equality and mutual respect. The social and cultural life of the Arabs in Israel has gone through the transition from traditional society to distorted modernization to a crisis period of cultural anomaly that bears the stamps of this very modernization, a crisis that stems from the desire to be like the hegemonic culture and from the inability to do so because of structural obstacles. Israelization also spawns the desire and incapacity to implement it. The challenge is to find a way to cultural development, to emancipation as a modern society, and to escape the complex of coming to terms with the hegemonic racist society, or of a fundamentalist reaction to it.

In the same fashion, one can call for gender equality in Arab society without tying it up with marginalization in Israeli society, or for the revival of Arab culture while searching for the liberating elements in it, without falling into the trap of chauvinism or attaching value judgments-positive or negative to ethnic affiliation.

The idea of autonomy is accompanied by two major distortions as it enters the political discourse about the Arabs in Israel. The first distortion stems from the Eastern European Jewish experience, where autonomy appears as a substitute for equality. The second distortion is represented by the debate within the Labor movement of the early seventies between Dayan and Allon concerning the future of the occupied territories in 1967 : functional compromise versus territorial

compromise. Dayan's functional compromise, as a solution to the vacillation between the unwillingness to withdraw and the inability to annex, appropriated the concept of autonomy in the framework of the peace talks with Egypt and concomitant with Moshe Dayan's crossing of the aisle from the Ma'arakh to the Likud.

Let us start with the second distortion. Modern history knows of autonomy for citizens who constitute a national minority in a state that expresses the national identity of the majority (Quebec in Canada, for example, or the Basque country in Spain). There are also examples of autonomy in multinational states, such as Belgium and Switzerland. All these cases involve citizens with full political rights in the state, not ethnic or national groups under occupation. This autonomy in no way infringes upon ties with the central government and full participation in social and political life. On the other hand, in the modern age self-rule for non citizens has been part of the process of decolonization, whose goal was defined in advance: political independence that converts autonomy into a stage in the gradual transfer of authority. In any case, the end of the process is agreed upon in advance. The case of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is exceptional: here we are not dealing with citizens with equal rights nor with an agreed-upon outcome of the process.

Whatever the results of the peace talks, one by-product is already clear: the meaning of autonomy has been distorted. Israeli public opinion, both Jewish and Arab, associates the concept with a state of occupation. When it is mentioned with regard to the Arabs in Israel, the Jews fear that such autonomy expresses separatist aspirations, while the Arabs fear a situation in which they would find themselves in the status of occupied territories. Paradoxically, the proponents of the idea must demonstrate its legitimacy because the distorted meaning is considered to be the norm. As noted, the first distortion stems from the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe, chiefly Poland and Russia. In that context the demand for autonomy, viewed as

the lesser evil, was put forward because the impossibility of attaining full equality was recognized. The Bolsheviks, Lenin at their head, were opposed to this idea, arguing that efforts must be concentrated on the struggle for equality, which when realized would make cultural autonomy superfluous. History has shown that both sides were wrong. Equality of Lenin's sort calls for absolute identity among national and ethnic groups, something that is of course impossible. On the other hand, autonomy without equality always leads to separatism.

The only situation in which autonomy can function without threatening to break up the central authority, on the one hand, and without demanding absolute concession of one's unique ethnic identity, on the other, is one in which autonomy is based on full civil equality. In such cases the only criterion for equality is citizenship, not ethnic affiliation. There are not two types of autonomy: autonomy as a substitute for equality on the one hand, and autonomy as a substitute for self-determination on the other. There is, however, territorial autonomy as opposed to personal autonomy. The model that strikes me as logical for the case of the Palestinian minority in Israel calls for personal cultural autonomy, and not because the demand for territorial autonomy goes farther. It must be remembered that the authority of local councils can be seen as territorial autonomy. Given that the Arabs in Israel are scattered all across the country, including in mixed cities, it is quite out of the question to apply territorial autonomy to them. Only personal autonomy is possible.

In the context of cultural autonomy, all authority related to the Palestinian national minority can be transferred to an elected council of Arabs in Israel, including, *inter alia*, the education system and its curricula, the state-run Arabic language mass media, and the authority to intervene in development plans in the Arab sector, including the return of expropriated lands where necessary, in consultation with the central authorities. Cultural autonomy will not maintain a separate judicial or police system. It will be subject to the

principles of equality anchored in the constitution (if there is one), including, *inter alia*, gender equality. At the same time, the nature of this autonomy will be determined through dialogue and competition among various and even opposing forces within the Arab population. One thing must be clear: any autonomy offered in the present situation, and as a substitute for equality, is to be rejected out of hand, because it will only perpetuate an institutionalized discrimination. Autonomy is possible only in a state that is the state of all its citizens. That is, autonomy in and of itself is no solution: it supplements the solution both in the case of the occupied territories and in the case of the Arabs in Israel. Any attempt to present autonomy as a substitute for equality has no historical, theoretical, or ethical grounding, if equality is a fundamental principle from which other values are derived.

VII

The elections to the Thirteenth Knesset marked a historical watershed or the zenith of the process that began following Land Day, a process that the *intifada* in the occupied territories merely strengthened. This process is the political Israelization or depoliticization of the civic struggle and its detachment from the national question. There is no doubt that the strategy of detaching the call for "two states," on the one hand, from that for "civic equality," on the other, leads to voting for Zionist parties. If the strategy relies chiefly on lobbying the establishment, the inevitable conclusion is that this should be done within the Zionist parties.

For the first time since 1977 a majority of Arab voters cast their ballots for Zionist parties, in the wake of a process of social and ideological legitimization of this pragmatism by "Arab intellectuals." The primaries in the Labor Party were a social event; an Arab intellectual who wanted to be heard and accepted in intellectual salons was fond of arguing that he supported Meretz, that is, the Zionist left. The failure of "Arab nationalism" or its most recent experience during the Gulf War

served as a tool for legitimizing the search for a "post-ideological" strategy.

The Palestinians' entering negotiations while accepting all the Israeli conditions was another factor that helped legitimize the idea of a "nation that dwells alone." The Arabs in Israel are the weak link in the process of converting the Palestinian national question into one of national minorities. Evidently the Labor Party will not miss the historic opportunity created by the fact that the majority of Arab voters voted for Zionist parties and the support for the Labor Party almost equaled that for the Communist Party. The time is ripe for a strategy of integrating or assimilating the Arabs into Israel to the margins of Israeli politics and society. The appointment of an Arab minister would have been part of such a strategy and accorded it great legitimacy. The Labor Party blew this opportunity, however - its first mistake vis-à-vis its own policy.

What is the significance of the discussions about an Arab cabinet minister? The discussion was legitimate; it took place; it was not rejected out of hand. In the end, however, it highlighted the limited civic rights of the Arabs in Israel. They have the right to support the coalition, but not to join it. For the first time in Israeli history, the ruling coalition gave its imprimatur to the fact that it would rise and fall on Arab votes; but this is all: integration, but of a peculiar kind, integration as marginalization, as relegation to the sidelines.

The Israeli left is correct, by its lights, when it demands the appointment of an Arab minister, given that at least ten seats in the coalition and the parties that support it can be attributed to Arab votes. Let us try to put together a more complex picture, however, and view the matter from the perspective of the Palestinian dimension of identity. To join the government would be to join a government of occupation, a government that occupies one part of the Palestinian people. An Arab minister in the state of the Jews and a government that practices a policy of repressing Palestinians while conducting negotiations with them would embody tagging behind, losing identity, and wanting to

be like the oppressors, to be part of them. When the demand for equality is not defined in a positive fashion (that is, not only as the absence of discrimination), it can be both a democratic and a servile demand; tolerating an Arab minister in a government of occupation would be repressive tolerance.

The Arabs in Israel have reached the zenith of an identity crisis, the most serious in their history. As Palestinian national rhetoric is disseminated in Arab local papers, an "Israeli-Arab" political behavior is disseminated with it. In an extraordinary coexistence, the nationalist rhetoric is printed on the very same page of the newspaper that contains advertisements for the Likud and other Zionist parties. Behind a newspaper that employs nationalist rhetoric there may stand a large Tel Aviv publisher. The acme of the crisis is the conversion of Palestinian national rhetoric into merchandise for the Israeli publishing industry. This is definitely a post-modernist situation in a pre-modernist reality.

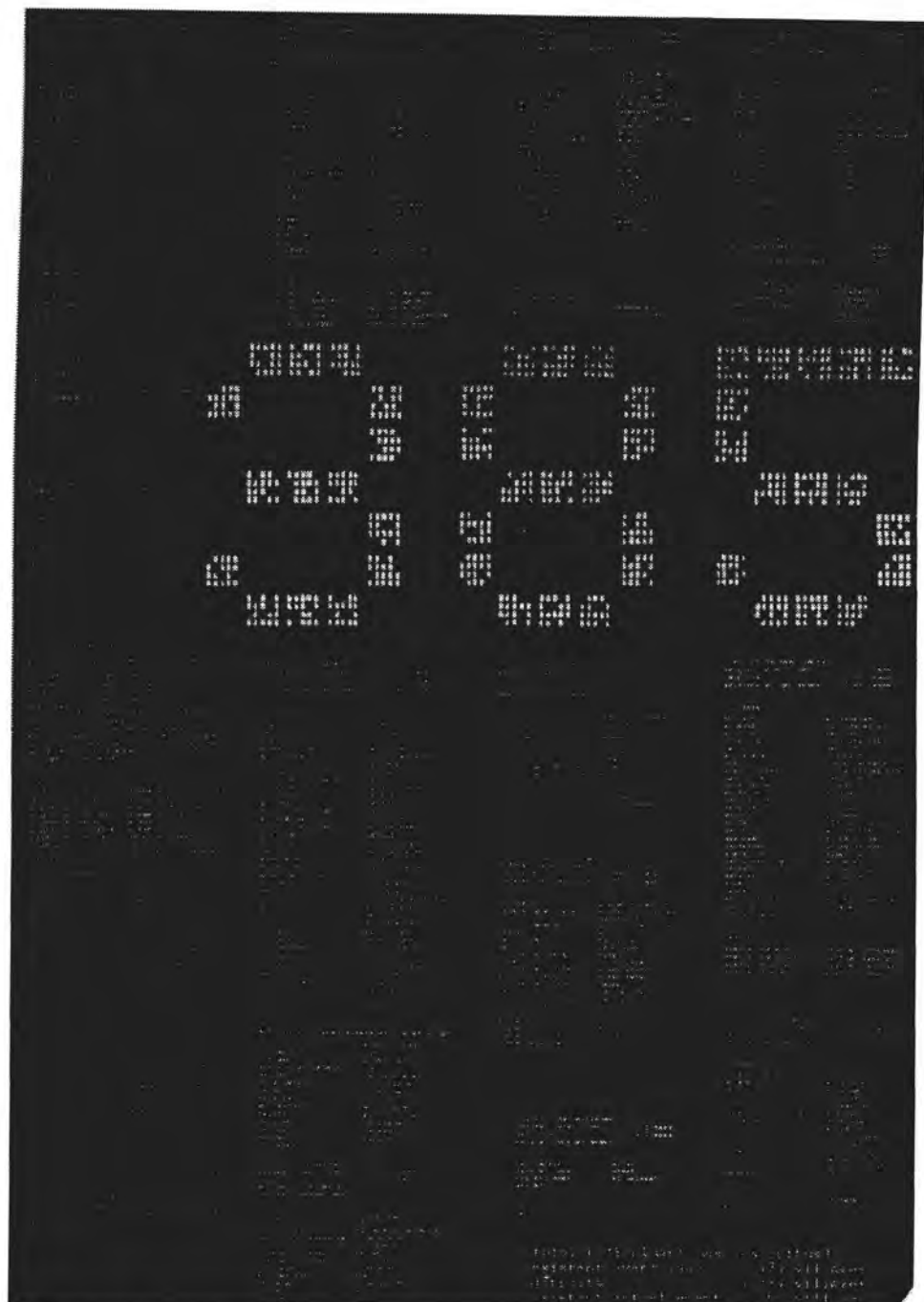
Does this situation embody potential for criticism, for changes in society and the state? I find it difficult to answer this question, just as it is difficult for me to decide whether the demand for an Arab minister represents any potential for change. I have contented myself with illuminating two aspects of a complicated phenomenon such as the demand for an Arab minister, a phenomenon indicative of the identity crisis besetting both the state and the minority that lives in it. Nevertheless, it is clear to me that the crisis of loss of identity carries social dynamite within it no less than does national fanaticism, and that the existing void between Israelization as loss of identity and separatism can be filled only by a historic compromise to which the Arabs in Israel, with their collective identities and rights, are partners. The compromise of binationalism in a single state, between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, would by its nature have included them, too. But even a two-state compromise must include them: their recognition as a national minority in a state that is the state of its citizens, a state whose majority is Israeli Jews and not the

Jewish people, a state that permits the Arabs in Israel to take their place in the public domain, that allows them to erect monuments alongside Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948 and to assert their collective identity and memory in public space. A historic compromise is not just the "indulgence" of granting equal citizenship, but also recognition of the injustice done to the Palestinian people, which requires such an "indulgence" to the Palestinian minority in the state of Israel. For the indulgence to disappear, along with the ingratitude, the injustice must be recognized. In this case, a historic compromise is a process of coexistence between two collective memories, not an attempt to reject or ignore history.

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Vladimir Bonacic and Dunja Donassy

385 destroyed Palestinian villages
 Before 1948 there were 475 Arab villages in the land that became Israel. In the following few years, 385 of them were completely demolished so that, in the words of Israel Shahak, "the accepted official myth of an 'empty country' can be taught in schools and told to visitors." In many cases Jewish villages were built on their ruins.



Hiroshima 1945

John Topham Picture Library

ISRAEL'S ACQUISITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: INCENTIVES AND OBJECTIVES

It is now widely recognized that Israel has a significant nuclear-weapon force. Starting with a short account of Israel's activities in the nuclear field, the study at hand will make a statement of the incentives and objectives in the acquisition of nuclear weapons. This will be followed by a section putting forth Israel's nuclear position. The fourth and last part of the study will deal with the views within Israel on the question of the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

After a conflict for several decades on the sovereignty over Palestine between the Palestinian Arab people, on the one hand, and the Jewish community in that land and the World Zionist Organization, on the other hand, Israel came into being in 1948. With Israel comprising over 80 per cent of mandatory Palestine, and with the integration of the West Bank into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the placing of the Gaza Strip under Egyptian administration, the Palestinian Arab people were left with no state of their own. The Palestinian-Arab-Israeli conflict, which has its national, ideological and political roots, entered a new stage with the outbreak of the 1967 war, resulting in Israel's occupation of Sinai, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, with its subsequent annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and the establishment of many Jewish settlements in these lands.

From its coming into being, Israel has been carrying out activities in the various fields of nuclear research and development. It has a well-developed nuclear infrastructure, and the scientific and technical knowledge and expertise necessary for the design and production of

nuclear weapons.¹ Israel's nuclear capability has been achieved through assistance from Western countries, in particular the United States, at an earlier stage, and then France.

There is a well-developed nuclear infrastructure in Israel. It includes nuclear institutes and university departments for nuclear research; a small nuclear reactor provided by the U.S. in 1955, and a larger nuclear reactor at Dimona, provided by France in 1957, with a capacity of 24 megawatts, with an annual plutonium output of 8-10 kilograms which, when reprocessed, would be sufficient for the production of more than one atomic device of 20 kiloton size.² The reactor started operation in January 1964. Sources have indicated that the reactor was expanded in the 1970s to about 75 megawatts. An indication of the military nature of Israel's nuclear activities might be that the Israel Nuclear Commission founded in 1952 was placed within the Defense Ministry, under the chairmanship of David Bergmann, who was a strong supporter of the development of nuclear weapons. Also significant is the fact that the Commission's existence was not revealed before 1954.³ It seems to some analysts that the decision of the Israeli government to establish the Dimona reactor was taken after the government decided to go nuclear.⁴

In the 1950s there was a similarity in the strategic thinking of both France and Israel. One analyst noted that, "the concept of a military alliance with France led to an adoption of French strategic doctrine that a nuclear deterrent is the only solution to counteract an inferiority in manpower and in conventional arms race."⁵ This similarity in strategic thinking by France and Israel facilitated reaching nuclear agreement in the 1950s.

The nuclear program was in the late 1950s controlled by the nuclear "hawks", embodied in Prime Minister and Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion, Shim'on Peres, and Moshe Dayan. They were of the view that nuclear capability would enhance Israel's security and increase its military might and deterrence vis-a-vis the Arabs.⁶

In 1968, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported that Israel already possessed nuclear weapons. With an available reservoir of scientists and nuclear materials and infrastructure, Israel has clandestinely been pursuing an advanced nuclear-weapons program. Some senior Israeli officials have admitted on a number of occasions that Israel has the capacity to produce nuclear weapons in a relatively short time. Former President of Israel,

Ephraim Katzir, for example, declared that Israel has a nuclear potential and that it will produce nuclear weapons if necessary.⁷ Such necessity might emerge in his view "in light of changes that occur in the policies of each of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the Soviet Union in the future."⁸

It is now almost universally believed that Israel has manufactured nuclear weapons. Since 1970, reports have been published indicating that Israel has crossed the nuclear threshold: that it has moved from a nuclear option to the actual acquisition of nuclear weapons.⁹

A detailed revelation of Israel's capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons published by the London *Sunday Times* on 5 October 1986 has corroborated the higher estimates of Israel's nuclear capabilities. The *Sunday Times* exposé was based on information and photographs provided by a 31-year-old Israeli Mordechai Vanunu, who had worked as a nuclear technician for nearly 10 years in Makhon 2, a top-secret facility built to provide the vital components necessary for weapons production at Dimona, the Israeli nuclear center. He was fired in early 1986 after Israeli authorities apparently became worried about his contacts with Palestinian students from the West Bank. Before being laid off, he reportedly took 60 color photographs of the building in which he was working, Makhon 2. The *Sunday Times* published some of these photographs in its report. Vanunu also supplied a lot of technical details on the facility and its operations.

Vanunu's testimony shows that Israel, besides having atomic weapons - a fact which has been long assumed or believed - has developed the sophisticated and highly classified techniques needed to build up a gigantic nuclear arsenal, thus making it a major nuclear power.

Vanunu's evidence and photographs have confirmed, according to the *Sunday Times*, that Israel ranks as the world's sixth most powerful nuclear power, and that it has possessed its secret weapons factory for more than two decades, with its plutonium extraction processes hidden by burying it beneath an innocuous-looking building. The date of starting the reprocessing plant is consistent with the details of a study published in 1982 by the French journalist Pierre Pécane.¹⁰

Vanunu's testimony and pictures reveal that the French reactor has been expanded and is probably now operating at 150 megawatts to allow it to extract more plutonium. With this expansion, the reprocessing plant has a yearly plutonium production rated at 40

kilograms (88 pounds), enough to build at least 10 bombs.

One more key finding in the *Sunday Times* exposé is that Israel's nuclear arms are considerably more sophisticated than previously assumed: a nuclear weapon evidently needs less than the generally presumed required amount of plutonium, namely 17.6 pounds (8 kgs.). They are also more powerful than the nuclear weapons the US Army dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the Second World War. The standards of weapons engineering and technology in use in Israel today are higher than the less developed weapon technology used in the 1940s, when the Hiroshima-and Nagasaki-type American nuclear bombs were made.

Perhaps the most significant item of information in the *Sunday Times* revelation is that it confirmed that the Dimona plant has been equipped with a reprocessing, plutonium-extraction facility which was provided by France, and which transformed the Dimona complex into a bomb-production facility. The *Sunday Times* stated that, in spite of the fact that France's President Charles de Gaulle claimed that his country put an end to assistance for the plant in 1960, it was constructed with French engineering and technological assistance. Francis Perrin, former senior French nuclear official, has confirmed this in a report which was published in the *Sunday Times*.¹¹

The *Sunday Times* Insight team approached Theodore Taylor, an experienced nuclear weapons expert, and Frank Barnaby, a nuclear physicist, to verify the accuracy of Vanunu's revelations. These experts, after scrutinizing his exposé and pictures, were convinced of their accuracy. They calculated that at least 100 and as many as 200 nuclear weapons of varying destructive power, had been assembled - 10 times the previously estimated size of Israel's nuclear arsenal.¹²

The *Sunday Times* stated that Taylor's and Barnaby's assessments were confirmed by other top nuclear scientists who were shown the pictures and detailed evidence and who asked to remain anonymous because they worked, at the time, in sensitive positions in Britain's atomic-energy industry and nuclear-weapons manufacturing.

Of great significance also is Vanunu's revelation that Israel has produced thermonuclear and nuclear fusion bombs, involving the principle of the hydrogen bomb, in which yields are hundreds to thousands of times greater than those of a single atomic bomb.

The relatively light weight and small size of the nuclear weapons scrutinized by U.S. and British scientists indicate that Israel would

have little difficulty constructing nuclear warheads for its missiles, including the short-range Jericho II missile.

Israel is universally believed to be a state in possession of nuclear weapons, and a state that has deployed nuclear weapons. The question for the international community is no longer whether it possesses the bomb, but rather how many and for what purposes.

It is unlikely that Israel has set up a nuclear arsenal with untested bombs and has further put its trust in such bombs, and that its military-security establishment would agree to its possession of nuclear weapons without having them tested.

It was reported that Israel obtained the results of nuclear tests conducted by France when the two states were cooperating in the field of nuclear development in the 1960s.

The *Time* article "How Israel Got the Bomb" claims that "some Western intelligence experts believe that Israel conducted an underground nuclear test in the Negev in 1963."¹³

There is also the question of the delivery systems of nuclear weapons. Israel has various systems needed to deliver nuclear weapons, such as fighter-bombers and missiles, with short, medium, and long ranges. In 1988, Israel successfully launched a satellite, with a particularly powerful booster, with a range of several thousand miles.

NUCLEAR POSITION

Israel has taken a nuclear position, which has a number of major components. Israel has used the acquisition of nuclear weapons as a deterrent and it will use them as a last resort, when the needs, in its perception, dictate their use.

Another component of Israel's nuclear position is its official denial of the acquisition of nuclear weapons and, at the same time, its allusion, through official and unofficial sources, to its being in possession of such weapons.¹⁴ Between the course of publicizing acquisition of nuclear weapons and the course of not doing so, or between adopting an open nuclear-weapon capability posture and a posture of concealing its nuclear-weapons arsenal, the Israelis have chosen an ambiguous nuclear posture, or the course of the "bomb in the basement", namely, to have the nuclear bomb without revealing its existence. Following this posture, Israel has surrounded its nuclear activities and intentions with ambiguity. Its nuclear installations are

accessible only to key governmental officials, workers and a few officially approved visitors under carefully controlled conditions. Carefully guarded announcements by Israeli officials on nuclear matters have reflected its posture of nuclear ambiguity.

This deliberate ambiguity of nuclear status is perceived by Israeli political decision-makers as beneficial to Israel's interests in the sense of checking any criticism which would certainly be forthcoming if it revealed the existence of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, this position may not provide a basis upon which Middle Eastern opponents to Israel could base a claim for their own nuclear protection. It generates a climate of uncertainty among them about Israel's real nuclear status; from this uncertain position, Arab military and defense planning has suffered.

Moreover, revelation by Israel of its nuclear acquisition would have prompted Arab states to make greater efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, and might have prompted Arab parties to unleash a preemptive attack on the Israeli nuclear facilities. Such revelation would have led to a greater Soviet influence in the Middle East.

Israeli nuclear position has since the early 1960s been standardized in the form of a few ambiguous formulations. Top Israeli officials admit that Israel has a nuclear option, and they have gone as far as to say that it "will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East", as former Premier Levi Eshkol stated in May 1964.¹⁵ This formulation has been repeated almost verbatim and has been consistently followed by many Israeli governmental officials ever since.¹⁶

The Israeli leader and strategist Yigal Allon added a significant nuance to this formulation, i.e., that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East, but it will not be the second, either.¹⁷ According to Evron, by this he indicated that Israel was aiming at the development of either a "bomb in the basement" posture, or a "high option" which would not be declared or exercised unless or until it became known that an Arab country was about to acquire nuclear weapons.¹⁸

Statements to the effect that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East could be interpreted in various ways as a "no first use or test" policy, excluding public announcement, and as denoting that Israel will not be the first to bomb, to deploy, to test, to produce, etc. Additionally, nuclear

weapons have already been introduced on board the ships of the United States Sixth Fleet and on board Soviet ships in the Mediterranean.

The third component of Israel's nuclear position has been its attempt to prevent Arab states from acquiring nuclear weapons, thus guaranteeing Israeli monopoly of such weapons, even if this necessitates military action. In 1981, Israel formulated the position that it would preempt any threatening nuclear development in the Arab world.¹⁹

Prompted, to a large degree, by Israel's nuclear undertaking, some Arab states have sought to acquire nuclear weapons, with no success so far. An Arab acquisition of nuclear weapons would be bound to weaken Israel's strategic position in the region, would weaken whatever nuclear deterrence Israel has and would strengthen the Arab strategic position.

INCENTIVES AND OBJECTIVES in the Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons

Israel's achievement of a nuclear-weapon option and its subsequent acquisition of nuclear weapons have been an important instrument in its policy pursued since the 1950s on the regional and international levels. Such option and acquisition have been prompted over the last decades by various interrelated territorial, military, economic, political and diplomatic incentives and objectives. Such option to possess, and then actual possession of, these weapons have served as an instrument in fulfilling such incentives and achieving such objectives. In this section, an exposé will be made of Israel's incentives for and objectives in its option to possess, and then actual possession, of nuclear weapons, thus complementing the ones mentioned in the foregoing pages. Though these incentives and objectives came about at various times, following various internal, regional and international political and strategic circumstances which Israel went through during the last four and a half decades, these incentives and objectives influence each other.

Security Conception

The security conception held by Israeli decision-makers has provided an incentive for developing a nuclear option. Israel came into being following costly military encounters between Palestinian

armed forces and armies of Arab states, on the one hand, and Jewish armed forces, on the other. Israeli political and military policy makers were aware that their achievement of military success and political independence was not only because of the energetic action of the Jewish population in Palestine *Yishuv*, but also because of the lack of military coordination among the Palestinian armed forces and the Arab armies, the lack of common political goals, prevailing dissension and rivalry among Arab states, and regional and international circumstances which were not favorable to the achievement by the Palestinian Arabs of political independence.

At least most of Israel's military and political leaders believed that with the passage of time, the quantitative superiority that the Arabs have in economic and human resources would become greater, and that the Arabs would also narrow the technological, scientific and educational gap existing between them and the Israelis in the latter's favor.

From the outset, Israeli decision-makers have worried about a swift social, political, economic and military modernization of the Arab countries. These apprehensions were strengthened with the 1952 Egyptian revolution and Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir's coming to power in Egypt in 1954, and the fiasco of the tripartite military attack by France, Great Britain and Israel on Egypt in 1956. This attack, which failed to achieve its goal of overthrowing 'Abd al-Nasir's regime, which was opposing Israel and Western influence in the Arab lands, resulted in the contrary, namely, enhancing his national, regional and international standing. With this security perception held by Israel's decision-makers, Israel's pursuit of a nuclear option, eventually leading to actual possession of nuclear weapons, caused little surprise.

Jewish Quality versus Arab Quantity

Related to Israel's security perception is its perception of how to cope with the Arab quantity which has been one of the incentives for Israel's development of nuclear weapons. A considerable number of Israelis, including Ben Gurion, have maintained that one of Israel's major security problems is that of Jewish quality *vis-à-vis* the Arab quantity. Given its relatively small population, and with increasing sophistication of conventional weapons in the hands of Arab states, with nuclear weapons Israel has sought to offset Arab quantitative advantage, thus helping to achieve its settlement and regional

ambitions.

The Nuclear Factor as a Tool for Bargaining

Israel has not committed itself to non-manufacture of nuclear weapons, as this commitment would be likely to lose the advantages of ambiguity in bargaining. Through taking the posture of nuclear ambiguity, Israel has strengthened its bargaining position in the international arena, and in particular in bilateral relations with the United States. The dangers of nuclear-weapon proliferation in the Middle East are of special concern to the big powers. Israel's disclosure of its acquisition of nuclear weapons would bring about or accelerate the pace towards nuclearizing the Middle East. Hence, Israel has been in a good position to win significant concessions by playing on the possibility of uncovering its nuclear status if its needs justify that. And by playing on this possibility, it has won major political, economic and military concessions, primarily from the United States.²⁰

Freezing the Territorial Status Quo and a Political Settlement

Israel has sought to perpetuate or "freeze" the territorial *status quo*, in order to force Arab states to reach a political settlement with it and to make them recognize it within its 1949 boundaries; within these boundaries, Israel is established on more than 80 percent of mandatory Palestine.

In this attempt to achieve such objectives, the nuclear factor has been one of the more important instruments. Fuad Jabber has expressed the view that, "With the realization that Israel cannot be militarily defeated" - with its acquisition of nuclear weapons-

the rationale behind the permanent state of war, the economic blockade, and the policy of non-acceptance and nonrecognition might be expected to break down ... In a nuclear context, the survival imperative might provide enough justification to make such approaches possible [by Arab countries].²¹

Also, Egyptian writer M. H. Heikal expressed the view that, given Israel's circumstances, which in the 1960s included Israel's growing isolation and a change in the traditional balance of power, it would be inescapable for Israel to acquire nuclear weapons, and then the sand would have run out for the Arabs, for the introduction of nuclear weapons into the Middle East would lead from a political and military

deadlock to maintain a strategic *status quo*.²²

With this nuclear tool, it is not unlikely that Israel has sought to promote its regional policy, involving, among other things, the Arab lands which it occupied during the June 1967 war, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights, which it has annexed; and southern Lebanon which it has controlled since 1982.

The validity of the argument that with Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons it would not be possible to have Israel withdraw from occupied Arab lands is questionable. The mere acquisition by Israel of such weapons might lead it, under certain domestic, regional and international political constellation, in the other direction, namely, to relinquish its hold on parts of the West Bank and the Golan Heights, because of the sense of enhanced security as perceived by Israeli policy makers, in return for a political settlement.

Nuclear-Weapon Development and Likely Conventional-Weapon Inferiority

An incentive for developing nuclear weapons has been worry about Israeli inferiority in the field of conventional weapons. A threat of more advanced Arab conventional weapons has been an important factor in Israel's nuclear-weapon development. Given its critical vulnerability in terms of geography and demography, Israel cannot afford Arab conventional superiority, even temporary, on the battlefield.

The October 1973 war challenged a basic assumption concerning Israeli conventional superiority, concerning the extent of self-reliance on Israeli conventional military strength, and about Arab military performance. Arab forces taking part in military action demonstrated a greater degree of command over sophisticated weapons technology and an ability to go in the field through "hot war" conditions for a longer period of time, and scored initial military gains on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. These forces also showed that they can take military initiative in a large-scale war, that they can engage in offensive military operations, that they have higher levels of training and organization, that they could coordinate their military moves and that they can be motivated. The war showed that the Israeli soldier is not invincible.

Nuclear-Weapon Acquisition and Costliness of Conventional Weapons

The costliness of conventional weapons has also been an incentive for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Supporters of this economic line of reasoning argue that Israel cannot financially continue indefinitely a conventional-arms race with Arab states, because of Israel's limited resources.²³

The argument that nuclear weapons provide a cheaper alternative to conventional weapons is unsubstantiated. It is true that the financial costs for the mere production of nuclear weapons are not a major problem for a state like Israel; they are probably less than the costs of conventional weapons. But it cannot be said that the acquisition of both conventional and nuclear forces, with the high costs involved in their maintenance, would be cheaper than that of a conventional force only.

Nuclear-Weapon Development and the Arab Response

It is claimed that one objective of Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons has been to offset an Arab nuclear force. This force, however, has not been developed, and Arab states lack the technological infrastructure, the nuclear materials and the skilled manpower required to design and produce nuclear weapons.

Israel's activities in the nuclear field and its production of nuclear weapons have been inducing some Arab states to engage in nuclear activities with a view to acquiring such weapons. If Israel reveals its nuclear-weapon acquisition, Arab reaction would be much stronger than it has been so far. It is not unlikely, though it might be remote, that one or more Arab states will acquire nuclear weapons. A prospective Arab nuclear force is certainly an important factor in the Israeli strategic thinking.

The Soviet Factor

With the development of nuclear weapons Israel also sought to face the Soviet challenge to its political and territorial interests and to limit Soviet activities in the Middle East, by raising the stakes of the game and making Moscow reassess the probable gains and risks. Some of the Soviet activities had a bearing on Israel. Such activities were in the form of Soviet military and technical aid to Arab countries, which were in conflict with Israel, and support for the Arab

position on the question of Palestine and the return of the lands which Israel has occupied since June 1967.

DETERRENCE

As stated, in the discussion of Israel's nuclear position, one of its objectives in acquiring nuclear weapons has been to deter its adversaries from endangering its survival and other interests, such as to deter them from attacking Israel's cities and from using chemical and other non-conventional weapons.

Deterrence has been defined in various forms; one of these forms is as follows: Deterrence is the threat to use military force in a punishing or preventive-punishing form with the objective of dissuading a challenger from taking a certain action involving use of military force. Nuclear-deterrence strategy involves the threat of deadly retaliation by the deterrent, inflicting "unacceptable" damage on the challenger in case of action by the challenger, endangering the deterrent's interests.

A number of distinctions need to be made. A distinction needs to be made between deterrence and coercion. Coercion refers to an attempt to compel an adversary to take a political or military action. Deterrence deals with preventing action.²⁴

Generally, deterrence deals with conflicts between states, but this concept may be applied also to conflicts between a state and a sub-state entity. Moreover, deterrence generally refers to military situations. As a matter of fact, in some cases, deterrence refers to non-military situations, such as political initiatives and economic undertakings. The effectiveness of deterrence depends on the ratio of military forces and on other non-military factors, such as psychological, economic, and perceptual factors.

Nuclear deterrence has a particularly important place in Israel's military-strategic thinking. Given this important place, in this part a more detailed discussion will be conducted, with a view to pointing out the many weaknesses of nuclear deterrence, not only at the present time, in which Israel is the only nuclear state in the Middle East, but also in a situation in which, besides Israel, one or more Arab states have acquired nuclear forces.

The Middle East is a subordinate or sub-system of the international system. The implications of the introduction of nuclear weapons into a regional sub-system are a result of the character of

international relations within that system and sub-system, and a result of the political-social-historical-cultural character of the states themselves within that subsystem. .

Therefore, it is appropriate, prior to treating the weaknesses of nuclear deterrence, first to examine the characteristics of the Middle Eastern sub-system.

The major characteristics are as follows: The multipolarity, with a considerable number of states players; asymmetry in the division of power among these players; persistent and heated territorial and ideological conflict between Israel and Arab states; points of direct friction between Arab states and Israel; an intensive arms race; and a strong involvement of outside powers for strategic interests. The Middle East, being part of the global system, has been influenced by it more than it has influenced it. Because of that, the Middle Eastern sub-system loses much of whatever measure of political control it possesses; a political context of *status quo* and anti-*status quo* state policies; a changing structure of the societies and regimes; and a host of other social, psychological and technological factors.

In global international relations, as well as regional relations, a dimension of anarchy prevails. The Middle East is no exception. This anarchy means the centrality of military force. Military power will remain the ultimate factor to which states resort in situations of conflict. There is also, in the global and regional international relations, the "security dilemmas" which refers to this anarchy.

Given these structural characteristics of state, regional and global international relations with respect to the Middle East, nuclear deterrence in this region has been and will continue to be weak. In the following, an examination will be made of a number of more specific circumstances and conditions which will show the weakness or failure of nuclear deterrence.

The process of deterrence could be split into two parallel courses: the set of considerations by the challenger, and the set of considerations by the deterrent. In each of these courses the following factors are included:

- One's assessment of his interests in the disputed subject and of the importance of these interests to the opposite part (the balance of interests). Balance of interests refers both to political and strategic interests directly involved in the disputed subject and to "secondary" interests such as prestige and credibility.²⁵

- One's assessment of the balance of military force between the parties and assessment of the adversary's perception of this balance (the balance of force).

- One's assessment of determination by the adversary party (the balance of determination). The balance of determination refers to the willingness to pay a price for the defense of religious, national, territorial or other values.

The success or failure of deterrence is conditional upon these three balances, and upon the interactions among them.²⁶

In these balances and in the interactions among them there is a subjective element. As success or failure of deterrence depends on these balances and on the interactions among them, then deterrence is likely to fail.

Related to the balance of interests is the credibility of a state's threat. Effectiveness of nuclear deterrence is a function of the credibility enjoyed by the nuclear state's threat. This credibility is, in turn, a function of the nature of interests at stake. Threat by a nuclear state would be more credible and, hence, more deterring when its survival is endangered. It is less than certain that a state threatening to unleash a nuclear strike would carry out its threat when only its marginal interests are in jeopardy. Hence, the threat in this case would not be fully credible. The October 1973 war is a case in point. Egypt and Syria unleashed a coordinated war in 1973 against Israeli targets in spite of the two Arab states' perceiving Israel as a nuclear-weapon state. The war was limited in its territorial objective; it aimed to recover parts of the Egyptian Sinai and the Syrian Golan Heights which Israel had occupied in June 1967. With this war, the two Arab states had a wider, i.e., political, objective, namely, to bring about closer superpower attention to the deadlock prevailing in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to cause the superpowers to bring considerable pressure on Israel to show greater flexibility regarding the occupied territories.

By the same token, past years have shown that the deterring effect of acquisition of nuclear weapons has been less than effective, in particular when it has to do with less-than-last-resort circumstances.

What has weakened nuclear deterrence has been the fact that Israel has been in control of Arab lands and has pursued a settlement policy in these lands, as Arab parties concerned have tried to recover these lands, risking a military confrontation between them.

As mentioned earlier, the Palestinian-Arab-Israeli conflict is not only military, but also national, ideological and territorial. The strategy of deterrence in laying excessive emphasis on the military aspect of conflict, is risky and not reliable in preventing the outbreak of conflicts.

It has been suggested that the existence of an Israeli nuclear force could deter limited Arab military activities. But, this force has been notably ineffective on this level of deterrence. The strategy of nuclear deterrence is not applicable to Israel's daily security needs; it has not been effective in deterring Palestinian and Lebanese factions from taking action or reacting to Israeli activities; it has not been of much use against clandestine activity and civilian resistance in the occupied territories; and it has not provided an answer to incident on the borders or to limited wars.

Israel's strategy of nuclear deterrence has not been effective in deterring some Arab states from undertaking programs for the development of nuclear infrastructure and activities. Indeed, the strategy of nuclear deterrence might bring about an opposite effect. The strategy of violence and of the "people's war," a strategy once formulated by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Syrian Ba'th Party, was based on an assumption that Arab states would not be able to defeat Israel in a conventional war because of the latter's nuclear capability. And Israel's nuclear position has contributed to an acceleration of the conventional-arms race quantitatively and qualitatively.

What further weakens the deterrent effect of the Israeli nuclear force has been the unequal vulnerabilities of Israel and Arab states. With such vulnerabilities, nuclear deterrence is weakened.

Israeli nuclear deterrence is also curtailed by the difficulty with which the nuclear force could be protected in the Middle East against a conventional or nuclear surprise attack. Quite a few technical writings dispute the claim that such forces could be protected against such an attack.²⁷

There is no doubt that possible surprise attacks, and the fact that there is a tradition of surprise attacks in the Arab-Israeli conflict, have weakened nuclear deterrence. This tradition is likely to have its effect even in the context of nuclear-weapons acquisition. This tradition reinforces and is reinforced by mutual distrust. The 1956, 1967 and 1973 wars had elements of surprise. Arab as well as Israeli leaders

have been very much concerned about surprise attack. They regarded the threat of surprise attack as one of the most dangerous matters in the Middle East.

There has been a strong tendency and aspiration among Arabs to achieve some strategic and political unity, or, at least, solidarity, and to promote social, economic and political development. Given its weaknesses, mentioned above, Israel has been a factor in frustrating Arab endeavors to achieve these goals. This Israeli position towards Arab strategic and political interests has seriously weakened deterrence.

For various reasons, including its relatively small population and territory, limited economic resources and close proximity of the frontiers to its center, Israel has adopted the dangerous doctrine of offense and pre-emptive attacks under certain circumstances. The fighting dimension on the political-strategic level was preferable, under certain perceived threats, to the deterrence dimension, for example in 1981-82. The stress on fighting has always been central to Israel's strategic and operational thinking. It is, therefore, likely that the deterring character of nuclear weapons in Israel would be weakened on the political-strategic level and would be perceived as a weapon for both deterrence and political pressure or coercion, with the destabilizing consequences of such development.

What is also most likely to weaken deterrence is how it is perceived by the adversaries. The perception by some Israelis of deterrence may be a case in point. It was stressed in Israel that credibility of deterrence would be strengthened by repeated demonstrations of Israeli resolve which could be proven by military strikes. Ariel Sharon, one of Likud's leaders, was - and may still be - one of the supporters of this approach. It is probable that, in his view, the deterrent effects would be increased by repeated Israeli strikes against Arab military forces.²⁸ It is obvious that taking such an approach in a nuclear setting would weaken deterrence.

Besides using nuclear weapons as a deterrent, Israel has directly and indirectly threatened to use them as a tool to exercise and increase political influence to achieve political and strategic objectives. Before 1967, claims were made by Israel's observers in which political "coercive" uses of nuclear weapons were mentioned. According to Evron, these weapons were perceived as making it possible for Israeli political leaders to demand that the Arab opponents agree to accept

the political status quo, namely, to accept Israel's existence within its then boundaries and sign a peace agreement.²⁹ And it seems there was an Israeli nuclear threat during the early days of the October 1973 war. Though this threat was aimed at stopping the Arab military offensive, it also had a political effect, in the sense of convincing Arab political leaders of the futility of attempting to defeat Israel militarily.

There is another factor, namely, the cognitive dissonance, which weakens nuclear deterrence. Recognition of the tremendous power of the adversary's nuclear arsenal would be likely to paralyze the non-nuclear party (or the party with nuclear inferiority). Given this, there is a tendency on the part of non-nuclear states to ignore the nuclear element, with the attendant consequence of weakening nuclear deterrence. Sometimes, a non-nuclear state has the tendency to underestimate the importance of the adversary's nuclear force, seeking to stress a position of deterrence by demonstrating resolve and courage *vis-à-vis* the nuclear threat.

What has further weakened nuclear deterrence globally as well as regionally is the imperfect perception of a nuclear threat. Decision-makers, in particular when they are under the pressure of dynamic domestic, regional and international relations, cannot fully perceive the revolutionary significance of nuclear weapons. It would take a long time before political and military leaders perceived that the intended function of nuclear weapons was deterrence. A better understanding of the significance of such weapons considerably lags behind their appearance and introduction. Moreover, given the uniqueness of nuclear weapons in terms of their destructiveness and the comprehension of the effects of their use, a conceptual confusion will certainly emerge in the Middle East concerning the significance of nuclear weapons.

Additionally, given these psychological, historical, political, national and ideological circumstances prevailing in the Middle East, it would be more difficult for decision-makers to reach the desired level of caution and self-restraint, and to achieve socialization of decision-makers with respect to the significance of nuclear weapons.

We venture to assume that success of nuclear deterrence would have to do with patterns of behavior of political decision-makers more than with their calculation of likely adverse effects of the use of such weapons. In a nuclear-weapon environment, regional stability would be sought in the caution and wisdom of political decision-makers

more than in any deterring effect such weapons might have.

Nuclear deterrence is weakened by the complexity of communicating a nuclear threat. Given the various distances of Arab states from Israel, an Israeli nuclear threat may be more credible with closer Arab states and less credible with further Arab states. Additionally, an Israeli nuclear threat would be likely to be taken more seriously by Arab states which are in direct confrontation with Israel, and less seriously by Arab states which are in a calmer relationship with it.

Nuclear deterrence is also weakened by the overflow of security concerns from the level of conventional weapons to that of nuclear weapons. The Middle Eastern sub-system is already partly nuclear and partly conventional. But should Arab states come to acquire nuclear weapons, Middle Eastern states would be acting on two levels at the same time: the conventional and the nuclear level. With action on these two levels, security concerns would overflow from the conventional to the nuclear level, thereby aggravating the already existing "security dilemma".

Moreover, in spite of their ferocity, the Arab-Israeli wars were not so disastrous as to make the parties to the conflict in a nuclearized Middle East extremely careful not to resort to use of nuclear weapons under certain military and strategic circumstances.

Given these many weaknesses of nuclear deterrence in the Middle East, the region has been and will continue to be threatened by a nuclear catastrophe. In view of this threat, genuine and just political settlement, recognizing the legitimate national right of the Palestinian people to an independent state, would be for all the states of the region the wisest means to avert a nuclear disaster.

DEBATE AND VIEWS IN ISRAEL on the Nuclear Question

On alleged or true grounds of security considerations, until a few years ago there has been in Israel little public discussion of the nuclear question. Until a few years ago, Israeli newspapers occasionally carried, without much comment, some speculations published in the foreign press about rumors of Israeli nuclear-arms activities. This was hardly followed up on a large scale by public debate, even within the Israeli academic community, with a few exceptions with an interest in policy and strategy.

If the nuclear issue has been considered seriously by military staff officers and strategic analysts within the security establishment, such consideration has not fully reached the intelligent lay reader. Israeli politics have not polarized on nuclear-weapons questions.

This lack of public debate has changed progressively, and there has developed a wider and more serious public debate in Israel of the nuclear question. As a matter of fact, Israel's public debate on this question has grown by several orders of magnitude in the past several years.

This debate manifested itself in the articles which were published in the Israeli press dealing with various aspects of nuclear weapons such as the advantages and disadvantages of acquiring nuclear options and weapons, and the strategic implications regionally and internationally. Among the early analyses by Israelis of the nuclear question in its Arab-Israeli context were the articles published in the Israeli English monthly *New Outlook*. Among these analyses were those written by Flapan³⁰, Dowty³¹, Haselkorn³² and Evron³³. The articles by Dowty, Haselkorn and Evron were followed by a series of seven articles written by Shlomo Aronson, which were published in the Hebrew Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* in 1976.

There have been several factors for the development of a wider and more serious public debate of the nuclear question. Israeli society has witnessed deeper rifts on various subjects, including nuclear-weapon possession. Public discussion on various political and security matters has become less monolithic. The progress Israel achieved in its nuclear weapons program, increased nuclear activities in some Arab countries, the October 1973 war, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and its aftermath, the costly race in conventional weapons between Israel and Arab states, Al-Sadat's visit in 1977 to Israel, the nationalistic feature of the Likkud party and Likkud government, the Israeli strike against the Osiraq nuclear facility near Baghdad, a fatigue in Israel with a continuing stalemated strategic situation - all these factors have combined to encourage and stimulate a more penetrating examination of the Israeli foreign policy and the security, political and strategic implications of nuclear-weapon acquisition.

In Israel there is a multiplicity of views across the political spectrum on the nuclear question; there has even been dissension on this question. There have been, at least, two positions concerning

nuclear armaments. One is the pro-nuclear school of thought. A number of political and public figures have belonged to this school. They have included David Ben Gurion, Shim'on Peres, Moshe Dayan and David Bergmann (leaders of the List of the Israeli Workers, with its Hebrew acronym, RAFI). As mentioned earlier, this school favored nuclear-weapon acquisition for Israel, and argued for such a security approach, attempting to show the advantages in the security field, as perceived by its adherents, of a nuclear-weapon status.³⁴

The other has been the conventional school of thought. Its advocates have included Yigal Allon, Abba Eban and Yisrael Galili. They objected to and had reservations with respect to Israel's introduction of nuclear weapons into the region, with a few advocating a full Israeli submission to IAEA safeguards.³⁵

In Israel, those who oppose acquisition of nuclear weapons are under less constraints to express their views on the matter than those proponents of such acquisition. Official responsibility and the mere proposition of acquisition of weapons of such nature, notwithstanding strategic or any other consideration, are only a few of the constraints on those who favor nuclear-weapon acquisition. Officials are also inhibited from making their case for such acquisition in view of the fact that statements on the matter would be related, and viewed as related, to the governmental position on the matter. Against this background, whatever governmental statement of views has been made on the acquisition of nuclear weapons can hardly serve as a real indicator of the direction of public opinion on this issue.

The division of political forces among the Israeli parties does not correspond, or run parallel, to the division of perceptions on the nuclear question. In other words, one's party affiliation does not necessarily tell us about his or her perceptions of the nuclear question. There is no correlation between party affiliation and nuclear perception. Each political party and bloc, such as the Ma'arakh (Alignment) and the Likkud, includes members taking contrasting positions on the nuclear question.

In previous years there was some such correlation, as leaders of RAFI, consisting mainly of David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Dayan and Shim'on Peres, called for Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons, while parties such as the left wing MAPAM (United Workers' Party) and Achdut Ha'avodah (Unity of Labor) opposed nuclear armament for Israel.

Moreover, and related to the preceding point, there is no necessary correspondence between the division between hawks and doves on the territorial issue and between hawks and doves on the nuclear issue. Some doves advocate Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons, whereas some very hawkish members of the Israeli establishment are opposed to, or less supportive of, Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. Ariel Sharon, for example, probably belongs to the latter category.

There are various explanations of this phenomenon, an important one of which is that a number of Israeli public figures look at nuclear armament as an alternative to all or part of the Arab lands that Israel occupied in June 1967. Support was conveyed for the acquisition of nuclear weapons as a way to agree on full or partial withdrawal from such lands and to reach a general political settlement. Supporters of this position have been characterized as dovish.³⁶

In the following pages a description will be offered of the views of Shim'on Peres, Israeli current Foreign Minister, who, as mentioned earlier, has supported Israel's acquisition of a nuclear capability and Yigal Allon who opposed this acquisition.

Peres's Views

Shim'on Peres, one of Israel's strong advocates of Israeli acquisition of a nuclear-weapons capability, has maintained for a long time that a nuclear capability could have deterrence. He is convinced that, in the future, there would be no survival for Israel were it to rely on the conventional balance of power. In his view, Israel's pre-1967 borders are not defensible with conventional weapons.³⁷

Peres has been aware that the Arabs enjoy an advantage over Israel in terms of territory and manpower, and he has sought to neutralize this advantage by introducing a new qualitative element. Talking about missiles and similar types of weapons, Peres wrote that if both sides, Israelis and Arabs, own such weapons, "the danger of war [might be] averted ... because the truth is that both sides will be vulnerable enough not to play with the idea of war."³⁸

Peres has often used euphemisms and innuendo in his expressions. When he mentions "science" it may be assumed that he means nuclear technology. The nuclear weapon, or "science" in Peres's terminology, will, consequently, establish peace: "Israel can bring ...[peace] closer - if she convinces the Arabs that with the help of science, we can eliminate their chance of defeating us."³⁹ According to Peres, it is not

enough that Israel should have the nuclear bomb; but the Arabs should also be aware of this fact.

Some analysts have maintained that Peres has been of the view that, in contrast to its present status and policy, Israel should declare a nuclear strategy based on either its options or on a real nuclear arsenal.⁴⁰ Peres has probably acted according to this line. Replying to a question put forth by a *Ma'ariv* reporter about whether Israel was the first Middle Eastern state to start nuclear research, Peres stated, "Luckily for us, yes. But Israel developed its nuclear potential under one declared restriction: We will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East ... A danger of crossing the nuclear threshold does exist. We have to be prepared for it."⁴¹

Allon's Views

Allon, who was one of the Israeli thinkers in the field of military strategy and who was aware of the dangers inherent in introducing nuclear weapons into the Middle East, sought to base Israel's defense on conventional weapons.⁴² He argued against Israel's adoption of a posture based on nuclear-weapons deterrence and advanced arguments showing the danger inherent in what is called a "balance of nuclear terror in the Middle East".

Allon opposed the nuclear-deterrence doctrine and called for more spending on conventional forces.⁴³ He characterized the call for an Israeli nuclear deterrent as a "result of unfounded pessimism."⁴⁴

In his important book, *Masakh Shel Chol*, Allon emphasized that since 1948, Israel has constantly improved its balance of power vis-a-vis the Arabs. For Allon, if Israel takes advantage of time and pursues the right policy in the days to come, there will be no reason why the situation should change. Allon was apprehensive about an arms embargo, and he wanted Israel to avoid overdependence on foreign military guarantees. Therefore, he called for Israel's variegating its sources of weapons supply.⁴⁵ Allon advanced several arguments for his rejection of the nuclear option: as a means of deterrence, conventional weapons are much more flexible than nuclear weapons; given their political and strategic flexibility, Israeli conventional methods could and should deter Arab challenges to Israel. Allon was of the view that there is rigidity in nuclear "deterrence" (it is questionable whether nuclear deterrence can prevail always under all circumstances). Being more rigid, nuclear weapons

would bring about an "either/or" situation, about a dichotomous choice that might neutralize itself if the other party chose to disregard it. Nuclear weapons being considered tools of last resort, Arab states could undertake a limited military action in which Israel would not take advantage of its nuclear edge; this would weaken the credibility of nuclear deterrence and would, consequently, widen Arab scope for free action.

Additionally, Allon was of the view that to go nuclear would cost Israel a high political price; by acquiring nuclear weapons it might prompt Arab states to adopt a crash program to possess nuclear weapons. Were this to happen, Israel would lose its edge and freedom of action against conventional threats or "salami tactic" operations on its vulnerable borders⁴⁶

Allon did not believe that the pattern of balance of nuclear terror which was prevailing between the United States and the Soviet Union was applicable to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Whereas the two superpowers have, in Allon's view, stable and responsible governments, the regimes in the Middle East are sometimes extreme and unreliable. Allon further noted that in a nuclear balance of power between Israel and Arab states, Israel would lose its advantages in conventional forces. In a conventional balance of power, what make the difference is the social structure, the quality of the individual soldier and the quality of the social and political systems. In a situation of nuclear balance of terror these would, in Allon's view, lose their significance, thus giving irresponsible Arabs an edge.⁴⁷

Allon, however, was of the view that if the Arabs chose to become a nuclear power, an Israeli nuclear option-a nuclear research project-could be maintained and advanced, as Israel should not be second in a nuclear race if Arab states started one.⁴⁸

It is worth mentioning that Allon authored his book, *Masakh Shel Chol*, soon after the June 1967 war, when he was still under the strong influence of Israel's military victory. This might explain Allon's optimism in assessing that, in the long range, Israel would be able to keep and even strengthen its superiority in conventional power *vis-à-vis* the Arabs.

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"For almost 25 years, the population of the occupied territories has been subjected to oppression, daily humiliation, violence, torture, arbitrary arrest, collective punishment, and -increasingly- totalitarian controls of extreme severity.

The American taxpayer has funded the operation, and still does."

Noam Chomsky



CLINTON'S REMARKS TO THE ISRAELI KNESSET

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Netanyahu, ladies and gentlemen of the Knesset: Let me begin by thanking the Prime Minister and the people of Israel for welcoming me to your wonderful country, and thanking all of you for giving me the opportunity to address this great democratic body where, clearly, people of all different views are welcome to express their convictions. I feel right at home.

Yesterday Israel took a great stride toward fulfilling the ancient dream of the Jewish people -- the patriarch's dream of a strong and plentiful people living freely in their own land, enjoying the fruits of peace with their neighbors. Nearly 17 years after President Sadat came to this chamber to seek peace, and Prime Minister Begin reached out in reconciliation. And just over a year after Israel and the PLO declared a pathway to peace on the South Lawn of the White House, Israel and Jordan have now written a new chapter.

Tonight we praise the courage of the leaders who have given life to this treaty, Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres. They have shown the vision and the tenacity of other leaders of Israel's past whose names will be remembered always for their devotion to your cause and your people -- Ben Gurion, Maier, Begin.

In your life, Prime Minister, we see the life of your country.

As a youth, you wished to fulfill the commandment to farm the land of Israel, but instead you had to answer the call to defend the people of Israel. You have devoted your life to cultivating strength so that others could till the soil in safety. You have fought many battles and won many victories in war. Now, in strength, you are fighting and winning battles for peace. Indeed, you have shown your people that they can free themselves from siege; that for the first time, they can make real a peace for the generations.

For the American people, too, this peace is a blessing. For decades, as Israel has struggled to survive, we have rejoiced in your triumphs and shared in your agonies. In the years since Israel was founded, Americans of every faith have admired and supported you. Like your country, ours is a land that welcomes exiles -- a nation of hope; a nation of refuge. From the Orient and Europe, and now from the former Soviet Union, your people have come, Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Yemenites and Ethiopians -- all of you committed to living free, to building a common home.

One of nearly four of the citizens of this country is an Arab, something very few people know beyond your borders. Even without the blessings of secure borders, you have secured from your own people the blessings of democracy. With all of its turmoil and debate, it is still the best of all systems.

In times of war and times of peace, every President of the United States since Harry Truman, and every Congress has understood the importance of Israel. The survival of Israel is important not only to our interests, but to every single value we hold dear as a people. Our role in war has been to help you defend yourself by yourself. That is what you have asked. Now that you are taking risks for peace, our role is to help you minimize the risks of peace.

I am committed to working with our Congress to maintain the current levels of military and economic assistance. We have taken concrete steps to strengthen Israel's qualitative edge. The U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission

unprecedented Israeli access to the U.S. high-technology market, and acquisition of advanced computers -- all these keep Israel in the forefront of global advances and competitive and global markets.

I have also taken steps to enhance Israel's military and your capacity to address possible threats not only to yourselves, but to the region. F-15 aircraft are being provided, and F-16s transferred out of U.S. stocks. We work closely with you to develop the Arrow missile, to protect against the threat of ballistic missiles.

As we help to overcome the risks of peace, we also are helping to build a peace that will bring with it the safety and security Israel deserves. That peace must be real, based on treaty commitments arrived at directly by the parties, not imposed from outside. It must be secure. Israel must always be able to defend itself by itself. And it must be comprehensive. We have worked hard to end the Arab boycott, and we've had some success. But we will not stop until it is completely lifted.

There is a treaty with Jordan and an agreement with the PLO. But we must keep going until Syria and Lebanon close the circle of states entering into peace, and the other nations of the Arab world normalize their relations with Israel.

This morning in Damascus I discussed peace with President Assad. He repeated at our press conference what he had earlier said to his own Parliament, Syria has made a strategic choice for peace with Israel. He also explained that Syria is ready to commit itself to the requirements of peace through the establishment of normal peaceful relations with Israel. His hope, as he articulated it, is to transform the region from a state of war to a state of peace that enables both Arabs and Israelis to live in security, stability and prosperity.

We have been urging President Assad to speak to you in a language of peace that you can understand. Today he began to do so. Of course, it would take more than words -- much more than words. Yet I believe something is changing in Syria. Its leaders understand that it is time to make peace. There will still

be a good deal of hard bargaining before a breakthrough, but they are serious about proceeding.

Just as we have worked with you from Camp David to Wadi Araba to bring peace with security to your people, so, too, we will walk with you on the road to Damascus for peace with security.

There are those who see peace still as all too distant. Surely, they include the families of those burned in the rubble of the community center in Buenos Aires; those in the basement of New York's World Trade Center; the loved ones of the passengers on bus No. 5; and of course, two people who, as been noted, are in the chamber with us tonight -- and we honor their parents -- the parents of Corporal Nachsan Waxman, a son of your nation and, I proudly say, a citizen of ours.

We grieve with the families of those who are lost and with all the people of Israel. So long as Jews are murdered just because they are Jews, or just because they are citizens of Israel the plaque of anti-Semitism lives, and we must stand against it. We must stand against terror as strongly as we stand for peace, for without an end to terror there can be no peace.

The forces of terror and extremism still threaten us all. Sometimes they pretend to act in the name of God and country. But their deeds violate their own religious faith and make a mockery of any notion of honorable patriotism.

As I said last night to the Parliament in Jordan, we respect Islam. Millions of Americans citizens every day answer the Moslem call to prayer. But we know that the real fight is not about religion or culture. It is about a worldwide conflict between those who believe in peace and those who believe in terror; those who believe in hope and those who believe in fear.

Those who stoke the fires of violence and seek to destroy the peace, make no mistake about it, have one great goal. Their goal is to make the people of Israel, who have defeated all odds on the field of battle, to give up inside on the peace by giving into the doubts that terror brings to every one of us. But having come so far, you cannot give up or give in. Your future must lie

in the words of a survivor of the carnage of Bus No. 5 who said, I want the peace process to continue; I want to live in peace; I want my children to live in peace.

So let us say to the merchants of terror once again, you cannot succeed; you must not succeed; you will not succeed. You are the past, not the future; the peacemakers are the future.

I say to you, my friends, in spite of all the dangers and difficulties that still surround you, the circle of your enemies is shrinking. Their time has passed. Their increasing isolation is reflected in the desperation of their disgusting deeds.

Once in this area, you were shunned. Now, more and more, you are embraced. As you share the waters of the River Jordan and work with your neighbors, new crops will emerge where the soil is now barren. As you join together to mine the Dead Sea for its minerals, you will bring prosperity to all your people. As you roll up the barbed wire and cross the desert of Araba, the sands will yield new life to you. As you dock in each other's ports along the Gulf of Aqaba, more and more people will have the chance to experience give wonders of both your lands, and more and more children will share the joys of youth, not the dread of war.

This is the great promise of peace. It is the promise of making sure that all those who have sacrificed their lives did not die in vain; the promise of a Sabbath afternoon, not violated by gunfight; a drive across the plains to the mountains of Moab where Moses died and Ruth was born; A Yom Kippur of pure prayer without the rumble of tanks, voices of fear or rumors of war. After all the bloodshed and all your tears, you are now far closer to the day when the clash of arms is heard no more and all the children of Abraham, the children of Isaac, the children of Israel will live side by side in peace.

This was, after all, the message the prophet Mohammed himself brought to peoples of other faiths when he said, "There is no argument between us and you. God will bring us together, and unto Him is the homecoming." And this was the message Moses spoke to the children of Israel when, for the last time, he

spoke to them as they gathered across the River Jordan into the Promised Land when he said, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live."

This week, once again, the people of Israel made a homecoming. Once again, you choose life. Once again, America was proud to walk with you.

The Prime Minister mentioned a story in his remarks that he never asked me about. Wouldn't it be embarrassing if it weren't true? The truth is that the only time my wife and I ever came to Israel before today was 13 years ago with my pastor on a religious mission. I was then out of office. I was the youngest former governor in the history of the United States. No one thought I would ever be here -- perhaps my mother; no one else.

We visited the holy sites. I relived the history of the Bible, of your Scriptures and mine. And I formed a bond with my pastor. Later, when he became desperately ill, he said I thought I might one day become President. And he said, more bluntly than the Prime Minister did, "If you abandon Israel, God will never forgive you." He said it is God's will that Israel, the biblical home of the people of Israel, continue forever and ever. So I say to you tonight, my friends, one of our Presidents, John Kennedy, reminded us that here on Earth, God's will must truly be our own. It is for us to make the homecoming; for us to chose life; for us to work for peace. But until we achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and then after we achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East, know this -- your journey is our journey, and America will stand with you now and always. Thank you and God bless you.

(October 27.94)



LIKUD ARABS.

The claim recently made that many Likud members support the peace agreements which the Rabin government signed with the Palestinians, is confirmed by two of the Likud's prominent Arab functionaries, Suleiman Mohammad Diab and Salah Assad Suleiman. For the past year they have openly expressed both their opposition to the policy of their party's leadership concerning the peace process and their own firm support for that of the Rabin government. Diab and Suleiman, who in past years supported the Labor Party, resigned, for similar reasons. Having embraced Likud, they are proud of their new party identity, and continue to oppose Labor on most issues. They are in fact prepared to represent the Likud party in the next Knesset.

Suleiman Diab is a resident of Tamra in Galilee, married and the father of two children. Upon completing his high school studies he joined his father's commercial business. Despite his relatively young age, at 28 he is a successful businessman. He manages a company that markets electronic appliances and furniture, with branches in several Galilee towns. For some time Diab has been negotiating with financiers from Kuwait who, according to him, have visited Israel twice with the intent of doing business. The Diab clan in Tamra numbers almost 7,500 persons: about one-third of the village population. For many years the clan was connected with the Labor Party. Zaki Diab, who served as the chairman of the local council, was the protégé of Minister Yigal Allon and one of the figures in the struggle of the first Land Day in 1976.

In 1984 "the Labor party neglected the Diab clan and we transferred

our vote to the Hadash coalition [led by the communist party]" said Suleiman Diab in a recent interview. "Following a fight with a rival clan in the village, several members of our family were arrested. "When the Diabs approached the Labor Police Minister, Hayim Bar-Lev, requesting his assistance, he refused to help. "The clan served faithfully the Labor party for 35 years," Diab observed "but they abandoned us at our time of need."

For years Diab has been active in the organizations of the Hadash youth, until in 1990 at a wedding of a Jewish friend in Nahariya, he met Roni Milo, a Likud leader. A conversation developed between them, and this was followed by additional conversations.

"I was very impressed by Milo's personality. Though he was a minister, (and not just any minister but the Police Minister), he spoke politely; I felt myself being drawn in his direction." Diab continued, "Additionally, I was satisfied with the Likud's policy in government. The Begin administration had brought peace with Egypt and began to implement a policy of more equality towards the Arab citizens in Israel. Opportunities of economic progress began to open to us." Indeed, this paved the road for his joining the Likud. "I was especially bowled over by the personal treatment which Likud leaders give all the people," he noted. In the struggle over the leadership of Likud, Diab, as well as Salah Suleiman, supported Binyamin Netanyahu. His Surroundings bear testimony to his loyalty: on the walls of Suleiman Diab's living room hang photographs of him with Netanyahu, with Dan Meridor--and also with Yitzhak Rabin, and laying prominently on the table is an album with photographs of the Prime Minister.

Suleiman Diab is now a member of Likud's central committee and the party's Bureau, and is the only Arab member of its political committee. In the party ranks he is considered to be the party's most important Arab functionary after the Druze MK Assad Assad. He organizes party rallies and meetings, and is proud of the fact that in the latest Histadrut elections, the Likud won the most votes in his village. "I do not deny that I aspire to be a Knesset Member but I want to achieve that position in a democratic manner and not as a political beggar. If Likud wants Arab votes it would benefit from placing me in a realistic place in its list for the Knesset. On the last *Id al-Adha* feast [in May], here in my home, Netanyahu heard from many Arab notables as to what benefits Likud would reap by placing a Muslim candidate from the Galilee in the elections list."

His political success notwithstanding, Suleiman Diab does not conceal his disagreement with his party's line on the peace process. If Rabin's handshake with Yasser Arafat on the White House lawns was fiercely criticized by the leaders of his party, he himself, Diab admitted, was very moved by it, "although much less so than when Sadat visited Jerusalem." With the approaching Knesset vote for the ratification of Israeli agreements with the PLO, Diab met with several Likud MKs and asked them not to vote against the agreements. "Knowing that Netanyahu was unwilling to hear about the possibility that any of the Likud MKs would vote in favor of the agreements or even "vote" without abstention, I worked to ward off the possibility of punitive measures which would be taken against Assad Assad, who did abstain," said Diab.

Diab is comfortable with his membership in Likud. "In spite of my disagreements with Likud I am not a member of the party in order to get any sort of position or job." He estimates that his statements in favor of the government's peace policy will arouse controversy, but hurried to clarify: "I am not alone in Likud. There are many Jews, including central committee and political committee members who generally agree with me, and others who have reservations regarding the activities of MKs David Mena and Tsahi Hanegbi which create an extreme right-wing image for the party. I feel close to the views of Milo and Moshe Arens. The Likud's place is in the center, not on the right. Those Likud members who share my views, are in silent fear of losing positions and jobs, and are afraid of harming their chances at the primaries."

Netanyahu, Diab claims, "wants peace no less than Rabin does." When he is reminded of Netanyahu's rejectionist statements, he says: "Even Begin, of blessed memory, declared at the time that he would move to Sinai to prove to Egypt that he would not withdraw from Sinai; but when he was in power, he signed the peace agreement which called for a full withdrawal from the Sinai. Rabin declared that he would not talk with the PLO, and right now he is holding talks with Arafat. There is no choice: there is no return from the agreement with the PLO. Opposition to the agreement is legitimate, although I think that Likud should recognize the facts and state that it will observe the agreements with the Palestinians. Else it will lose its strength."

Suleiman Diab is already dreaming about peace with Syria. "If there is a referendum about the Golan I will support withdrawal," he

stated. "Whoever thinks about peace with Syria without returning the Golan is misled and is misleading others. If there is peace with Syria the gates to the entire Arab and Moslem world will be open to Israel."

Attempts by Labor Party functionaries to bring Diab over to their party have failed. "On the eve of the Histadrut elections I met in Nazareth with the Labor chairman, MK Nissim Zvilli and rejected his enticing offers out of hand. And Zvilli wasn't the only one. I am not joining the Labor Party because I do not believe in its leaders and its functionaries. The fact that the majority in Likud do not support the agreements with the Palestinians and oppose withdrawal from the Golan will not lead me to leave Likud. But if in the coming elections Likud comes to power and cancels the agreements with the PLO, I will immediately announce my resignation. That is my red line."

Diab's party comrade, Salah Assad Suleiman, is chairman of the local council in Bueina-Najidat. For years he headed an appointed council and in the latest municipal elections he was supported by 90 percent of the voters. For years Suleiman worked with the Labor Party and managed its elections campaigns in his village. "In 1979, after the peace agreement I discovered that Likud was a democratic party and I left the Labor Party and joined Likud," he told me last week in his home, surrounded by several friends. Among those who were invited was Mordechai Mashiah, a Likud member who for years headed the appointed local council in Deir al-Assad, and who is currently a paid consultant of municipal authorities in the Galilee. Hussein Suleiman, chairman of the Mashad local council and a member of the Labor Party's bureau, was also present.

According to Salah Suleiman, his joining the Likud was the result of "the warm personal attitude with which I was received. In the Labor Party," he claimed, "they continue to treat the Arabs like they did in the 1950s. Under Labor government the Arab towns were ruled by Shabak, full of corruption and informers. A civil servant was afraid to read the Communist Party paper. Anyone who voiced any criticism whatsoever was branded as an enemy of Israel, a member of a fifth column. Our situation first changed for the better under the Likud rule and our economic conditions improved," Suleiman stated. Nor did he hide the fact that he joined Likud. In contrast with the not-so-distant past, most Arabs have stopped terming functionaries belonging to ruling parties as "agents" or "traitors." Salah Suleiman succeeded with time, to be elected to the party's central committee, and later to its

bureau.

Suleiman replied negatively to the question of whether the history of the Herut party and the Irgun with its role in Deir Yassin massacre, hindered his decision to join Likud. "Those matters belong to the past. The Germans sinned against the Jews 50 years ago and destroyed them and today there is a German Embassy in Tel-Aviv. If people constantly want to live in the past, they will always march in place," he explained. He also argued that the minority in Likud which supported the agreements that were signed with the Palestinians was not small. "I supported the agreements both as a Palestinian Arab and as a citizen of Israel who wants the good of Israel and its security," he stressed.

For that reason he also supports peace with Syria through withdrawal from the Golan. Against the argument that was voiced by Likud leaders, that giving up the Golan is akin to giving up a vital strategic asset, Salah Suleiman replied: "Today the best strategy for Israel is achieving comprehensive peace with all Arabs. In a time of war, the Golan will not save Israel. I do not believe that anyone sincerely believes that the security of the State of Israel depends on remaining in the kibbutz Ramat Magshimim on Golan. We've had enough wars. Security will be achieved through peace. Peace will lead to economic prosperity and will put an end to Israel's isolation in the Arab world."

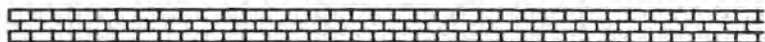
Salah Suleiman does not agree with the argument that, if Likud wins the next elections, it might in part be responsible for ending the peace process. "I remain in Likud because of the democratic process within it. In my view, Likud also wants peace. Netanyahu, who currently voices extreme right wing statements will change as soon as he is in power and bears the responsibility. He will then operate differently and support peace."

Yosef Elgazi

Haaretz, October 7, 1994

* Israeli Arabs Who Supported Likud, *From the Hebrew Press*, Vol. VI, NO.12, (the Middle East Data Center, December 1994), pp. 22-4.





JABRA

1920-1994

I was overwhelmed by a deep sense of sorrow and loss on learning that my friend, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, passed away in Baghdad on December 12, 1994. In mourning his death, *Jusoor* joins readers everywhere who love Jabra's art and writing. For about half a century, his prolific contributions in a variety of genres have been continuously enriching Arabic literature and prodding it toward eminence in modernity. His life work, as we have always known and as we now look at it in retrospect, has been consistently done with elegance and refinement, with love for truth and beauty, with profound commitment to his people and the good of humankind, and above all with unshakable conviction and faith in the moral responsibility of the writer.

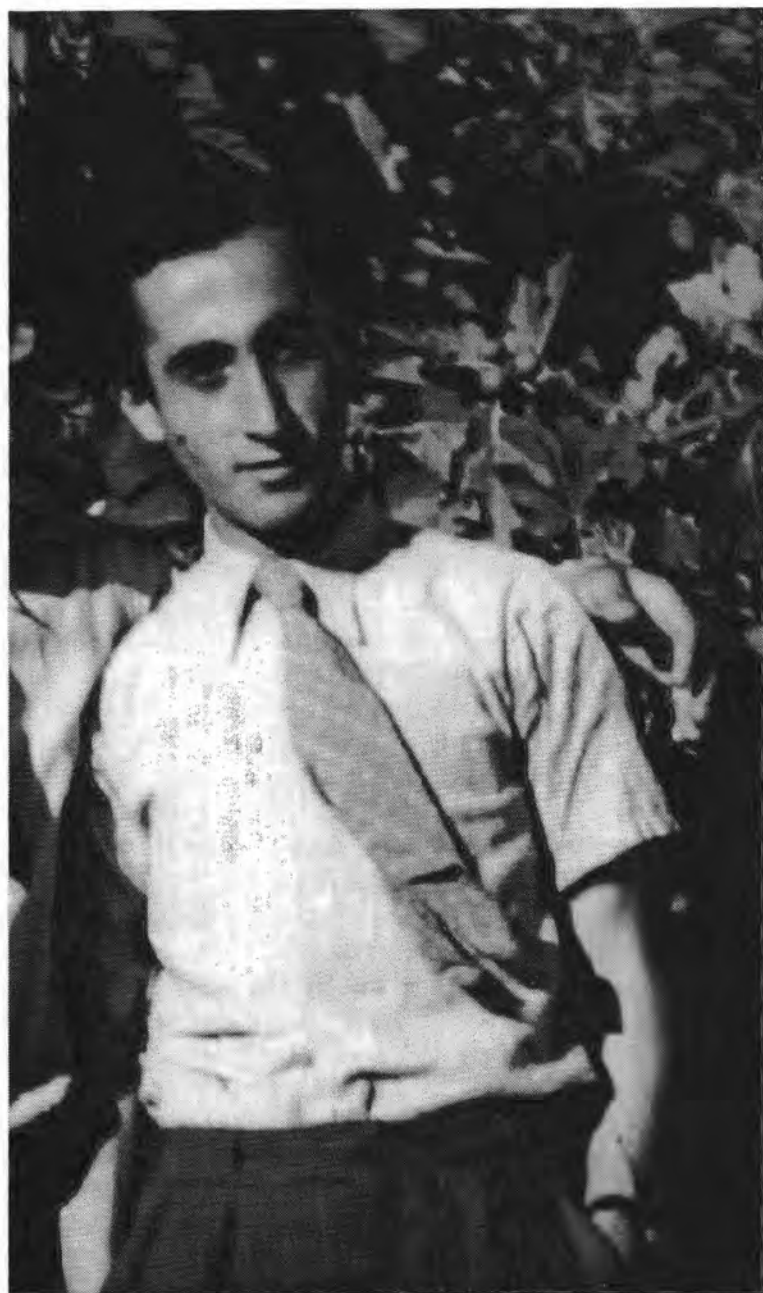
Born in Bethlehem, Palestine on August 28, 1920 he began his elementary schooling there before moving with his family to Jerusalem where he continued his education and graduated from the Arab College on the eve of the Second World War. Having won a fellowship to study English literature in England, he earned a B.A. in 1943 and a M.A. in 1948 at Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge University. Back in Palestine, he taught at the Rashidiyya College and other schools in Jerusalem (1943-48) during the troubled final years of the British Mandate, and had to leave his homeland and go into exile in the wake of hostilities that led to the establishment of Israel in 1948. He



eventually went to Iraq and taught English literature at the College of Arts of the University of Baghdad (1948-52) but a two-year research fellowship took him to Harvard University (1952-54). On returning to Iraq, which was to become the land of his permanent residence with his Iraqi wife, Lami'a, and their two sons Sadeer and Yasser, he became head of publications at the Iraq Petroleum Company (1954-77), then cultural consultant at the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Information until his retirement (1977-84). He traveled widely in the Arab world, and also in U.S.A., some countries of Europe, and the Indian subcontinent, often as a coveted speaker, a visiting university lecturer, and an invited participant in a number of national and international conferences.

Although he is predominantly recognized as a novelist and a literary critic, Jabra is also an essayist, a poet, a short-story writer, a translator, a painter, and an art critic. In all his literary and artistic endeavours, he has been a force for change in the Arab world and a modernizing influence over his contemporaries. His call has been for a revivification of Arab culture, not by imitating the West that he knows very well, nor by emulating the great achievements of the Arab intellect in the past in which he is strongly rooted, but rather by daring to create new additions to them and to those of world culture. The body of his works has been an attempt to contribute to this aim.

Jabra's poetry, like his other writings, clearly reflects his sensibility regarding the modern Arab age. Written in what he calls *free verse*, it totally ignores traditional Arab prosody based on quantitative meters and rigid rules of rhyme, and adopts a qualitative rhythm of prose in which he harmoniously couches his feeling and thought to freely express a new vision of Arab life. He published four collections in Arabic: *Tammuz fi al-Madina* (Tammuz in the City) (Beirut, 1959); *al-Madar al-Mughlaq* (The Closed Circuit) (Beirut, 1964); *Law'at al-Shams* (The Anguish of the Sun) (Baghdad, 1978); and *Sab' Qasa'id* (Seven Poems) (1989) gathered with the former three in one volume entitled *al-Majmu'at al-Shi'riyya* (Poetical



At home. Jerusalem, Jurat Alnasas. 1938

Collections) (London, 1990). But, he has a large number of unpublished poems in Arabic and in English which, I hope, will see the light one day.

Jabra has also written eight works of fiction. They include a collection of short stories entitled '*Araq wa Qisas Ukhra* (Arak and Other Short Stories) (Beirut, 1956); a novel he jointly wrote with 'Abd al-Rahman Munif entitled '*Alam bila Khara'it* (A Mapless World) (Beirut, 1982); and six other novels which are: '*Surakh fi Lail Tawil* (Screaming in a Long Night) (Jerusalem, 1946; Beirut, 1955) ; '*Hunters in a Narrow Street* (London, 1960), translated into Arabic by Muhammad 'Asfur as '*Sayyadun fi Shari*' '*Dayyiq* (Beirut, 1974); '*al-Safina* (Beirut, 1970), translated into English by Adnan Haydar and Roger Allen as '*The Ship* (Washington; D.C., 1985); '*al-Bahth 'an Walid Mas'ud* (Search for Walid Mas'ood) (Beirut, 1978); '*al-Ghuraf al-Ukhra* (The Other Rooms) (Beirut, 1986); and '*Yawmiyyat Sarab 'Affan* (The Diary of Sarab Affan) (Beirut, 1992).

Jabra's books of literary criticism include '*al-Hurriyya wa al-Tufan* (Freedom and the Flood) (Beirut, 1960); '*Al-Rihla al-Thamina* (The Eighth Voyage) (Beirut, 1967); '*al-Nar wa al-Jawhar* (Fire and Essence) (Beirut, 1975); '*Yanabi' al-Ru'ya* (Fountains of Vision) (Beirut, 1979); and '*Aqni'at al-Haqiqa wa Aqni'at al-Khayal* (Masks of the Real and the Unreal) (Beirut, 1992).

His books of essays often include literary, historical, and cultural studies such as '*A Celebration of Life* (Baghdad, 1988); '*Ta'ammulat fi Bunyan Marmari* (Meditations on a Marble Edifice) (London, 1989) ; and '*Mu'ayashat al-Namira, wa Awraq Ukhra* (Living with the Tigress, and Other Papers) (Beirut, 1992) .

Jabra's books on art and art history and criticism include '*Art in Iraq Today* (Baghdad, 1961) ; '*Contemporary Iraqi Art* also available in Arabic and titled '*al-Fann al-'Iraqi al-Mu'asir* (Baghdad, 1972) ; '*Jawad Salim wa Nusb al-Hurriyya* (Jawad Salim and the Freedom Monument) (Baghdad, 1974) ; '*The*



Jabra with his brothers, Issa (left) and Yousef (right), Beithlahm 1950

Grass Roots of Iraqi Art (Baghdad, 1983); and *al-Fann wa al-Hulm wa al-Fi'l* (Art, Dream, and Action) (Baghdad, 1985).

Jabra wrote two volumes of autobiography: *al-Bi'r al-Ula, Fusul min Sira Dhatiyya* (London, 1987), translated into English by Issa J. Boullata as *The First Well: A Bethlehem Boyhood* (forthcoming: Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1995); and *Shari' al-Amirat, Fusul min Sira Dhatiyya* (Princesses Street: Chapters from an Autobiography) (Beirut, 1994). The former volume is a delightful account of his boyhood in Bethlehem and later in Jerusalem before teenage; the latter deals mostly with what he called in one of his letters to me the *annus mirabilis*, i.e., the year 1951 in Baghdad in which he met his beloved wife, Lami'a.

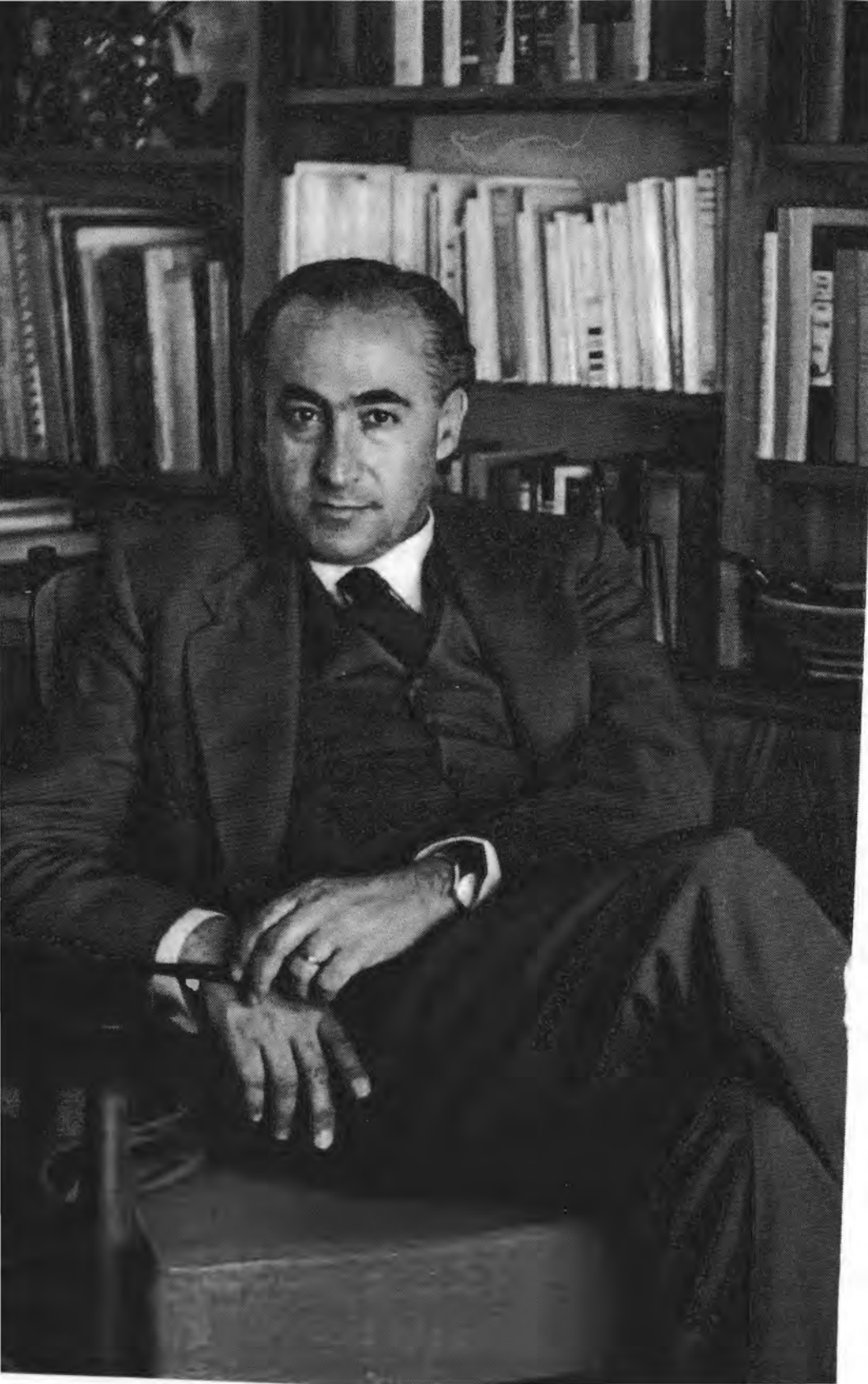
Of Shakespeare's plays, Jabra translated seven into Arabic and provided them with illuminating introductions. The plays are: *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*. He also translated forty of Shakespeare's sonnets and prefaced them with a long scholarly study in his book *al-Sunitat li William Shakespeare* (The Sonnets of William Shakespeare) (Baghdad, 1983).

He also translated from English about thirty other books in a variety of fields, including works by William Faulkner, Samuel Beckett, Edmund Wilson, Jan Kott, Oscar Wilde and James Frazer

In his last letter to me from Baghdad received in Montreal a few days before he passed away, Jabra wrote among other things:

"I now have several invitations to speak at seminars and conferences -- in Amman, Beirut, Paris, Athens. But I am no longer enthused by travel, because the land trip between Baghdad and Amman (which is inevitable) exhausts me. I am waiting for the return of the blessing of direct travel by air to the wanted places. But it seems that my waiting will be long."

The exhausting land trip across the desert is necessitated because of the UN sanctions against Iraq; but Jabra's exhaustion is also a result of his heart ailment. He suffered a heart attack a

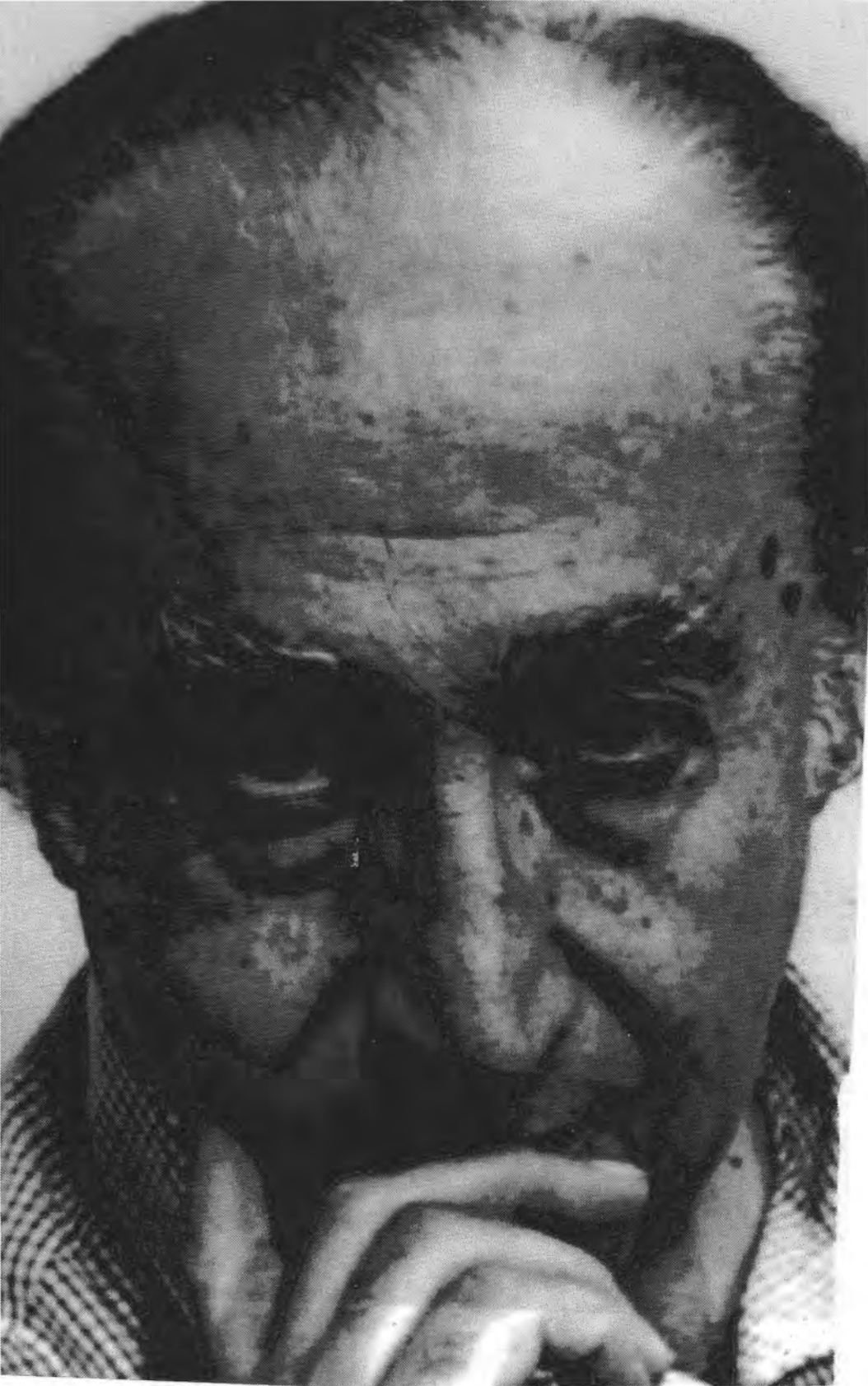


few days after his beloved wife died on October 14, 1992 leaving what he called in another letter "a horrible void in my life." His treatment led to some improvement but he constantly needed medicines, which were difficult to find because of what he described as "the mean and unfair siege" of Iraq following the Gulf War.

"I am still under treatment," he wrote, "but I have improved a lot. I have to avoid exhaustion of all kinds, especially psychological exhaustion. Yet my head teems with things I want to write."

It is ironic that Jabra, for whom the themes of love, freedom, and salvation have been basic values throughout his *oeuvre*, should be himself a victim of their lack in the final years of his life like many of his fictional characters as well as his Arab compatriots and others in the world. He has often written about the city in his poetry and his fiction, not only as a real conurbation with heartless conflicts between classes and individuals, but also as a symbol of modern human civilization. Like T. S. Eliot's wasteland, the city in his view needed radical change to bring about fertility and happiness. Without prescribing solutions, Jabra has created fictional characters who are ever in search of salvation, in quest of love, and constantly yearning to break out of some sort of siege. He portrays life as essentially tragic, and human beings as creatures continuously attempting to free themselves of its constraints -- often unsuccessfully.

On the personal level, Jabra was always friendly and warm, full of *joie de vivre*, enthusiastic about new things, invariably generous with others giving them his time and effort. Having risen from humble origins and worked very hard, he was grateful for the recognition that he was deservedly receiving in his later years. But he never sought self-aggrandizement, or thought he was above serving others and being of use to them. His accomplishments were for the good of humanity, he believed, and he was pleased when he felt they were having some effect. He received several awards and



honors in recent years, including the Targa Europa for Culture, Rome, 1983; the Prize of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of the Sciences, 1987; the Saddam Hussein Award for Letters (Fictional Art), 1988; the United Arab Emirates Award for Literary Studies, 1990; and the Jerusalem Medal for Culture, Arts, and Letters with which he was decorated by Yasser Arafat in 1990 at the Palestine Festival held in Cairo.

Jabra was the president of the Society of Art Critics in Iraq and a member of: The International Association of Art Critics, the Union of Iraqi Writers, and the Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists.

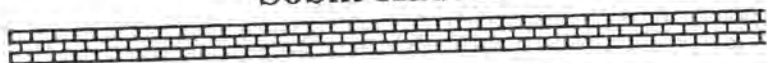
His numerous friends, admirers, colleagues, and students scattered around the world will sorely miss him.

Issa J. Boullata

McGill University

Montreal

* Dr Issa J. Boullata was born in Jerusalem, Palestine. He taught at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, then joined McGill University, where he is currently professor of Arabic literature and language. His publications include *Outlines of Romanticism in Modern Arabic Poetry* (1960) and *Badr Shakir al-Sayyab: His Life and Poetry* (1971), both in arabic; *Modern Arab Poets, 1950-1975* (1976), an anthology in English translation; he is editor of *Critical Perspectives on Modern Arabic Literature* (1980), and translator of Ahmed Amin's *My Life* (1978) and Emily Nasrallah's *Flight Against Time* (1987). In addition to over seventy articles in scholarly journals, his latest work in English is *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought* (1990). His English translation of Jabra's autobiography, *The First Well*, is forthcoming from the University of Arkansas Press in 1995.



THE 1994 PARIS INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD SAID

Let us begin with the traditional questions: Your childhood, family background, Cairo, and early cultural influences.

Although I was born in Jerusalem, I spent most of my formative years in Cairo, Egypt until 1951. I was the product of colonial schools, and was always in a state of almost permanent war with both schools and teachers. Although I got a very good education, I was really not very influenced by any teachers or figures in authority whom I always considered on the other side. The main influences in my early years were, first, my music teacher, who was a remarkable Polish pianist living in Egypt called Ignace Tigerman, with whom I studied piano, and who was a fantastic musician. He was a Polish Jew who came to Egypt in 1933 and stayed there right through to the war; he died in 1967. He was a great influence on me, especially in regard to my music. .

My second greatest influence was a political one, Dr. Fareed Haddad, who was our family physician. He was originally a Palestinian who, was born in Egypt, and was a member of the Communist Party. He was killed in [the prison of] Abu Za'bal in the late 1950s by Nasser's police. He was really my introduction to politics, to Left politics, and to oppositional

politics. These two men meant a great deal to me in my early days.

The family I grew up in was a strange combination of Arab, Christian and Western elements, since my father had served in the American army during the First World War, becoming an American citizen, and then returning to Palestine. We lived in a very peculiar way. I am now writing a memoir of those early years, because our family was living in Egypt in a kind of cocoon, without much connections to the world around us.

Of course, when I came to America in 1951, I immediately went to establishment schools: a Boarding school in New England, then to Princeton University, and then to Harvard. And during those twelve years, between 1951 and 1963 when I got my Ph.D., I had very little to do with Arabs. I was entirely a student of European and Western literature, and it was not until 1967 and the war that I once again came back into contact with the Arab world.

In the meantime, my family remained in the Middle East, and I would go back in the summers to see them. But my education was entirely Western, and it was not until later that I acquired, on my own, an interest in the Arab world, in Arabic language and literature.

In one of your interviews, you mention leaving Victoria College, and Egypt, 'in disgrace'. How was that ?

Yes, I was kicked out in the spring of 1951. They let me back to complete a semester, but it was at that point that my family decided that I had had such a difficult time in the English system that, since we are Americans by citizenship, it would be wise to send me to America. So, in the spring of 1951, they found a Boarding school for me in Massachusetts, and that summer of 1951, I left Egypt and came to America by myself. I spent two years in this Boarding school—I think they were the two most miserable years of my life. They were extremely difficult years.

Nasser came to power when you were in America, and the first political article you wrote was about the Suez Crisis. In a sense, can we say that you were a Nasserite at this period?

Absolutely, because in America Nasser represented to me a rebellious figure against the authority of the West. I loathed and detested John Foster Dulles, who was a Princeton graduate—they were always very proud of him.

What was particularly exciting about Nasser was that he was defying America, so I held on to him. But by the late 1950s, when my friend Dr. Fareed Haddad was having trouble with Nasser's police and I discovered what Nasser was doing internally, not only to the Communists but to the bourgeoisie like the people of my own family, I became very quick to dislike him. Of course, by 1967, I lost any hope with him. And I remember very clearly when he died in 1970, a number of universities and Arab organizations in America asked me to come and speak in commemoration of him, but I could not. I found him a tragic figure, but so flawed that I could not really recognize myself in what he had become.

So I was an early Nasserite, but only for a short period.

Could you tell us more about the intimate and subjective aspects of your childhood?

It is difficult for me to talk about them, because I am trying to write about them now in a memoir. I am not sure I can speak much about it, except the one thing which has always been very important to me. I felt, since my earliest consciousness, that I was always at odds with the environment in which I lived. I mean, I was in Egypt, but I was not Egyptian; I was an Arab, but I was not a Muslim; I was a Christian, but I was a Protestant and not an Orthodox Christian; I was an English-speaker, but not an English person; I was an American, but I had never been to America.

So I think the most important prevailing sentiment of my early years, which continued when I went to America, and

which really emerges in the things I started writing in the 1980s on the theme of exile, was that I always felt myself to be both an internal and an external exile. I was never where I was supposed to be. Although I was born in Jerusalem, my feeling about Palestine has always been that of Palestine as an idea rather than as an actual place. When I revisited Palestine in 1992, I found myself at odds with it then as well.

I have decided that I am in a state of permanent dislocation, and that sentiment has been very important to me all through my life, which meant, finally, that anything I did—intellectually or aesthetically—I had to do on my own.

I could not really follow the path of a teacher or somebody who went before me. I would have to invent a path for myself, and that has been a characteristic task for me. During my early years, for example, I was always in trouble with the teachers. I mean, figures of authority for me have always been the enemy—*always*. That included my father, and included every teacher I ever had, with one or two exceptions, and it also included every institution with which I have been associated, whether a school or a university, or an institute or whatever. And I decided that that is what makes me productive: the sense of not exactly alienation, but the sense of opposition and tension and rebelliousness.

But at other times I felt I was nobody at all, because it was not until much later that I discovered who I was, or, in other words, my process, which is what I am writing about in my memoir: that "Edward" was an invention of my parents, and with a name like Edward in the Arab world, it is kind of a joke, you know. So I had to discover who was underneath Edward; another person could emerge who could occupy the place of Edward more comfortably than I did. And that is what happened.

Could you elaborate more on the early intellectual influences?

Well, I think the most important early influence on me was the novel.

I was a lonely child, and I did not really have friends. But my parents had a very large library of books, of an astonishing variety: novels that went the whole way from the classics such as Dickens and especially Walter Scott on the one hand; and junk novels, 19th century popular authors like Arthur Conan Doyle, John Buchan, and Edgar Rice Burroughs, the author of *Tarzan*, on the other hand. And I read them all!

So from the very early part of my life novels were really very important to me, and I was very influenced by Scott, Daniel Defoe, Alexandre Dumas, and by sequences of novels like the *Kenilworth* novels. I used to read Shakespeare with my mother, and go and see the plays that would come to Egypt during the War. For example, I saw John Gielgud in 1944 doing *Hamlet*. But I read all of Shakespeare with my mother, and she was a great influence on me intellectually in those early years because she was interested in what I was interested in.

And of course there was music. I played the piano, and I used to listen to music, especially opera pieces in the early days. I remember my discovery of Rossini at the age of 12 or 13. I was precocious, and I had a very remarkable musical memory, so at the age of two I could remember and repeat thirty or forty songs. It was the same when I began to listen to classical music and play the piano. I was able to do it very quickly and very early.

And then, of course, I went to school. But I think one of the most important intellectual influences on me, which I discovered on my own when I was about 21 or 22, was Giambattista Vico, the Italian philosopher. That represented a great milestone in my intellectual life. I was always influenced by philosophers and writers who were eccentric. I remember being early influenced by Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, William Blake, and especially interested in various French writers such as Charles Baudelaire, Gérard de Nerval, and above all Gustave Flaubert and Marcel Proust whom I discovered when I was 18 or 19. But I think the longest influence in my entire life, from my teens until today, is Joseph Conrad.

Was it especially significant that the first novel you read was Robinson Crusoe ?

I am not sure it was the first novel I read, but it was among the first. My impression is that the first novel was Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, which I read when I was about twelve, and I remember being very taken by it. *Robinson Crusoe* came right after it, because I remember the book itself. The edition was beautiful, with colour pictures. I was fantastically taken with the whole idea of Robinson and his clothes, his parrot and Friday. Friday was a complete mystery to me, and I did not identify with him, and could not understand who he was, simply because he is silent in the book. It was not until later that I began to read *Robinson Crusoe* from another point of view.

But the story interested me, and I remember trying to imitate it myself and to write stories like that. I remember once in particular, when I was 12 or 13, that I thought of writing a story about a book, the adventures of a book being read, and then being passed off as persons, and then to be left behind on the train. I think it was a fantasy about myself, that I could maybe someday become a book.

Books were really my strongest companions, and I was very grateful to have all these books at home. But I remember, when I was 13 or 14, that I began to be disturbed that certain books that I was interested in (like Freud, a technical book on marriage, and a few novels) were removed from the library by my parents. They were trying to censor what I was reading, so it was always a battle between me and them. They had Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and I remember reading in it when I was 12 or 13, and I left it out one day—a lot of my reading was done secretly in my room, later in the night or early in the morning. I made a mistake with Freud's book and put it aside, outside; and the next day it disappeared and I never saw it again.

The late 1950s and most of the 1960s witnessed what we call the "liberation" of social science, especially Lévi-Strauss's

anthropology and Lucien Lévi-Brühl's psychology of primitive peoples. Did these and similar trends have an early influence on you ?

Of course. My education in America, both as an undergraduate at Princeton and a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard, was solidly conventional. I had an excellent education. I mean I studied English, French, Italian, Greek, and Roman literatures, some drama, lots of philosophy and lots of music. But it was in very conventional ways, largely non-theoretical ... I never took any course in theory, simply because it was not given.

At Harvard I was getting a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, and there you have to read everything. So there was no emphasis on methodology, just reading a lot of stuff. As for methodology, when I was a graduate student at Harvard, I remember reading French translation of Georgy Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* done by Kostas Axelos. And that same year, 1958 or 1959, I read Lukács's *The Historical Novel*, translated into English by Stanley Mitchell. And of course by that time I had discovered Vico.

So I became hungry for texts of theory that would get me out of the formalistic, a historical, untheoretical path I was following, on my own! I was reading for exams and writing my dissertations on Conrad, but I was always looking for theory. For example, in 1959 or 1960, I discovered Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, also on my own.

Then I finished my Ph.D., left Harvard in 1963 and came to Columbia, and almost immediately I began to be aware of certain things happening here, in France. The first person I was aware of was Lucien Goldmann, who led me to Claude Lévi-Strauss, and then to Roland Barthes. I met them all in 1966 during a big conference in America: Jacques Derrida, Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Tzvetan Todorov and others. By the middle 1960s I was completely involved with their works, because I discovered them in a sort of 'decolonization' of the mind, a liberation from the rigid Anglo-Saxon, untheoretical, Positivist, and what they called the "new critical approach,"

which was very much under the influence of T. S. Eliot, and had become in America a kind of orthodoxy which I found suffocating.

In my case this lasted only for about ten years, from between 1963 to the early 1970s, until Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish* came out, and then it ended. I found that I had taken what I wanted from them, for I was never a member of a school. I used to meet Derrida here, in this hall, where he used to come and give lectures, and we were quite friendly. But my method has always been to refuse the systems of others, and I realized they were all building empires and wanted disciples. I knew all of them personally, but I realized that my own way was different, and that I was going in another direction. By the middle 1960s, around 1967, the Arab world became important to me, and these people had nothing to say to me on that level. So I dropped them. Furthermore, I was never tremendously interested by Louis Althusser, although I read him, everything he wrote. But he did not move me, and I found later, in the late 1960s, that my discovery of Antonio Gramsci was much more important to me, as well as my continuing interest in the early Lukács: *Theory of the Novel*, *The Souls and the Forms* and his early essays on drama. I think Lukács is a very great figure.

What about Michel Foucault ?

I was interested in Foucault, and I was the first person in America to read and write about people like Goldmann, Levi-Strauss, Merleau-Ponty along with Foucault. But I found them interesting only up to a point, because in the end they did not speak to my experience. They represented a French view that I found interesting and ingenious, and there were things to take from their works, but it was not an influence that abides. I lost interest in the French, whom I thought were becoming more and more provincial.

Earlier in your career, you were one of few critics of your generation in the United States to have stressed and introduced

Continental philosophy, interdisciplinary studies, phenomenology, Structuralism, etc. But you were particularly harsh on Derrida. Why, and has your attitude changed somewhat?

Look, I was always influenced by something, which may be incidental, but to me meant a lot:

In the first place, I thought that Derrida was an extremely brilliant man; I liked him, and we had good personal relations. I felt, however, that there was this slight disparity between the supremely skeptical and even anarchical method of Deconstruction on the one hand, and its methodological elaboration on the other. It seemed to me that, perhaps inevitably, what looked like a speculative and Nietzschean skepticism was quite easily being accommodated to various institutions: the fact that Derrida became "Derridean," and that there was in America a school of "Derrideans" (he once told me that his reputation in America was completely different from France, where nobody paid very much attention to him). It seemed to me, then, that he began to lose the freedom to continually explore.

Secondly, I felt that (and I remember discussing it with Noam Chomsky), there was a great deal in his work that was confusing and self-indulgent, than there was a serious attempt to engage politically with some of the main issues of the day, whether it was Vietnam or Palestine or Imperialism. I felt that there was always a sense of dodging, and it bothered me.

When I would see him, we would have interesting exchanges. He came to my house; I invited him to give a seminar at Columbia in the late 1970s; and when I came to Paris to give some lectures at the Sorbonne in 1978, he took me out, and I met his wife. On a personal level things were always quite nice. But I felt that he began to develop a sense of defending a territory and an orthodoxy. And I kept saying to myself, "What does this really mean?" I was also getting more involved politically, while I thought he was getting less involved politically.

I began to get very impatient; there seemed to be too many texts to me, and there was too much going on for it to be useful. Once a couple of students of mine, South Africans, wrote a critique of something he wrote about apartheid. And I heard later (he never told me this himself) that he thought I was instigating them to write against him. So the paranoia began to bother me. He is somewhat older than I, but I never felt myself to be an institution. I do not care what people say about me; they say a lot of worse things about me than they have ever said about him. I felt he was too *soigné*. I liked him; I admire him a lot, and he is a very brilliant man. But I find the complexity to be more complicated than it perhaps needs to be.

Do you still think that he is much more an essayist than a philosopher?

Without a doubt, but I mean that as a compliment. Nietzsche was an essayist, and it depends what you mean by a "philosopher." For me the definition of a philosopher would include, let us say, Hegel whom I do not like at all. I have always been uncomfortable with the Hegelean tradition. Gramsci is an essayist, and Theodor Adorno too. I prefer the essayist, and I think of myself as an essayist. But what began to bother me about Derrida was his relationship to his own time, which seemed very problematic.

Your first book, Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography (1966), which in its original form was your doctoral dissertation at Harvard, was the first study of the relationship between Conrad's private correspondence and his short fiction. You articulated certain arguments which later became basic topics in your criticism of the novel: identity, individuality, phenomenology of existence, dynamic tensions between nations and individual entities, Europeanism, the "literary" as expanded in society and history, etc. Was the book a major step toward a methodological system of contrapuntal reading?

This book, along with *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), were important *tâtonnements*. I was trying somehow to find a common ground between the deepest problems of *expérience vécue*, in the case of Conrad it is the problem of identity, or the absence of identity, or the dislocation of a broken identity, and the problem of language and continuity. I focused on Conrad's short fictions because I felt he was always worried about developing his short fictions into long fictions, or going from the short form to the extended form, which was always a problem.

So I took all these problematic aspects of Conrad and tried to place them in a context that was relatively objective to the reader: his life, the circumstances of his career, success, failure, publishers, friends, sailing, Poland... And I started to develop a method for dealing with the two together, contrapuntally. And, in a small way, I think I succeeded. But I was very dependent on existential philosophy, and the phenomenology of Merleau Ponty and Heidegger, as you mentioned.

In *Beginnings* I was obviously trying to figure out a new way for myself, and I thought that the principal emphasis should be on Vico, because he was the man who discovered that beginnings are never found but always made, created, invented. I mean that by that time I was in my early 30s, I had done conventional things, I had written a book and some essays—now, I wanted to make a name for myself in some way. It took a long time. It began in 1966, and it was interrupted by the war, and I felt there that the important thing was to show the interest of method in relation to the creation of a project. The choice of method was a form of beginning, but the center of it was, of course, the problem of narrative—where does one begin? where does one go?—but narrative not as a given thing but as a form of molestation, and how it impinges on one's sense of self, and so on.

Then came the whole question of a critique of adequate to the idea, and that was intensified by my interest in the Structuralists and Foucault. I considered both books as

experimental ones with very rich results. And they were punctuated very perfectly with the war of 1967 and my return to the Arab world. I went to Amman in 1969, and I was there in 1970 for Black September. In the same year, I began to be involved in the Palestinian movement, and I married a Lebanese woman, Mariam; and in 1972-73 I finished *Beginnings* in Beirut where I spent the academic year on sabbatical. It was there that I began to study Arabic—I had never studied Arabic before in school, because I quit when I was 15. I took a daily course with Anis Frayha, and we read a lot of modern and classical texts: Taha Hussein, Tawfiq al-Hakeem, Naguib Mahfouz. Then we went back and read al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, which were my big intellectual discovery at that period, including a lot of other historical and poetic texts.

From then on, I think, that led directly to my interest in orientalism. It occurred when I came back to Harvard as a visiting professor in 1974. It was the period of the War of 1973, and I began to see how it might be possible for narratives to be popular representations. Narrative was the main thing, and after that came the problem of representation. And so I began to be interested in what later became *Orientalism*.

Before discussing Orientalism, there is one relevant point: In most writings about Islam and the East in general, the focus remains on what we might call urban centers, sources and texts. Society, daily life, oral tradition and culture were almost totally absent. How do you interpret this phenomenon?

It was not until sometime in the 1980s that I discovered a school of historians in India called the Subaltern Studies, whose entire work is based on non-written sources. It is a school of historiography that suggested that the history of India was being written by the nationalist elite which is an urban phenomenon very much under the influence of the British. What they were interested in was the history of India as seen through the struggle of the urban poor and the rural masses for whom there

are no texts.

It was not until then that I realized there were other histories, popular and unwritten, for which a whole method could be invented, and which the Indians were doing. But I never discovered an equivalent effort in the Arab world. I am not interested in folklore or popular rituals, because I am a city person. But what I am interested in is the existence of a para-literature, which no school of Arab historians has focused on as a group. It has to be a group undertaking.

India was a British colony for 400 years; education in India was dominated by the British, and after independence in 1937, a significant number of Indian intellectuals were able to take advantage of what they had learned from the British, and to branch out and study Marx, Gramsci, Barthes, etc., and to use an entirely original combination of approaches as applied to their own history.

It is my impression that in the Arab world we have direct copying. Somebody reads a book by Foucault or Gramsci, then wants to be a Gramscian or a Foucaultian. There seems to be no attempt to transform those ideas into something relevant to the Arab world. We are still dominated by the impact of the West, from a position I have always thought of as inferiority and discipleship. Look how many people in North Africa, in the former French colonies, write as if they were students of Foucault, Derrida or Todorov. It is a kind of repetition fantasy which I find almost comic; and a lot of it, in my opinion (and it is just an impression), has to do with an incomplete understanding of what the West is.

Their focus on one isolated aspect. For example, you start to study France, but you know nothing about the Anglo-Saxons! You cannot study the West that way, and in my opinion you cannot do that without knowing a lot about the United States, which is the most powerful influence in the Western, and perhaps the entire, world today. There is not a single Arab university that has a department that specializes in American Studies. Astonishing! There are two big, major, American

universities in the Arab world, one in Lebanon and the other in Egypt, but they have never taught *America*. This is not an indictment of them, but rather an indictment of us, that we have not demanded of our universities that they have departments of American Studies to study America seriously and scientifically, along with the rest of the West. You have loud slogans on the West ("Colonialism," "Imperialism," etc.), or else you have little schools of imitators (Hegeleians, Marxists, Derrideans, etc.) who do not know the languages. For example, Gramsci in Arabic is translated from English, not from the Italian; Lukács is translated from French, not from German; Marx is translated from English. This is very problematic.

So I do not think we have had our process of enlightenment and liberation yet, intellectually. For this, I think, the intellectuals are to blame, for we cannot blame it on either Imperialism or Zionism.

In Orientalism (1978), your dominant interest in the political power as discourse shifted radically, and you argued that Orientalism as ideological and methodological retrogression, to use John Kucich's word, is instrumental in the production of Western identity as well as an (imagined) Eastern one, and in the strengthening of a Western "will to power" over the Orient. How did the shift first begin?

As I said, I think it really began with the 1973 war, because I saw that what was taking place on the ground in the Middle East, plus what I knew from my own lived experience, did not at all correspond with what was being written in the American media, for example. And I conceived the notion that what one saw and read in the West was part of a system of misrepresentation, whose history and influence, in my opinion, had never been examined systematically and in depth. So I proceeded to do that, and I began to work on it in the winter of 1974 at the same moment that I was correcting the proofs of *Beginnings*. I was at Harvard at the time.

This project developed during the following nine months. I was very busy, my daughter was born, and I was teaching a great deal. By the late part of 1974, I had written a proposal in which I was trying to interest publishers, and I remember that at the beginning there was very little interest. But the best thing that happened to me was that I received a fellowship in January or February of 1975 which allowed me to spend the entire year of 1975-76 in California, working on the book.

So we went to California, and I spent the most rewarding intellectual year I have ever had. I was completely free from teaching duties (I was at Stanford, something called *Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences*); I did not have a telephone, I had a lot of secretarial and bibliographical help, and I just spent the whole year reading—everything that had to do with this object called "the Orient." At the same time that I was in California with my wife and my two small children, the Civil War in Lebanon was beginning. So I felt at the time that there was a historical process building up, which I was writing about. In the Middle East itself the Arab civil war was beginning to destroy the Arab world as we had known it. And if you remember, the first page of *Orientalism* starts with a French journalist Thierry Desjardins going to Beirut and writing regretfully [of the gutted downtown area] that, "it had once seemed to belong to ... the Orient of Chateaubriand and Nerval."

As I went along, I had to invent a beginning, method and an intention for what I was doing. I was trying to arrive at a conclusion which would allow for the liberation of the whole system. I do not know whether I succeeded or not, but the idea was to replace the system of domination and misrepresentation called "Orientalism" with a space which would allow us, as a people, to write our own history. But that really did not happen.

Is there a broad definition of the "West"? What about the various cultural, historical, or economic distinctions? Where does Japan, for example, fit in to such a definition?

There is more than one West. I never believed that the West was monolithic, or only one thing. I agree with you that there is a kind of European cultural coherence which one can discover. That would also include America, especially when you look at the recent debates taking place there on multiculturalism, whose many opponents say that America is part of the Western, the Judaeo-Christian, tradition. The important thing about all these discussions, which I try to be very strict about, is that they are all constructions, contestations, and representations. They do not exist by themselves.

Conversely, if we look at "Islam," Islam is the site of an interpretive context where people are saying, "This is what Islam is;" there is no pre-existing definition of Islam. And in the end, the dynamics of this is what interested me. Because if you think traditions are basically stable and identities are formed and remain the same, then there is no history. You cannot write history, or think of theory as something that intervenes in history. Then it becomes simply the chronicle of what is already taking place. But my view is that the historian, or the analyst, or whatever someone like myself maybe called—I myself do not know what I am—is basically part of the context. In that respect one makes the distinctions you have just made: There is the West, the cultural idea of the West, the economic power of the West, etc. But these distinctions never exhaust everything that exists within the system. There are always resistances and exceptions, and it depends, therefore on what you are trying to chronicle, discuss, or analyze. If you are trying to talk about the major system, as is done so often in the Arab world, then you simply become a slave of the "West," of that West. Whereas if you say, well, the West is a provisional thing; let us see if we can deconstruct it and find ways of distinguishing between its orthodox and its heterodox character, its affirmative and its negative characteristics. That is a much more interesting task. I have always tried to do that.

So on the one hand, one tries to criticize the dominant, the official, the orthodox, on the other hand, to animate and

become a part of the heterodox, the oppositional, the dissenting and, above all, the provisional aspects of the West.

One of the main arguments against your book Orientalism was that you somehow neglect the different German contributions to Oriental studies. Another wider perspective of criticism came from Albert Hourani and Maxime Rodinson. How do you respond?

I made it quite clear that I was studying Orientalism not from the point of view of everything that was written about the Orient, but only from the point of view of world powers that had a colonial interest in the Middle East: France, Britain, and the United States after World War II. People can study German Orientalism as much as they want. But it just happens to be part of my view that I am not interested in the epistemology of all Oriental studies, but only in those that were connected to an Imperial project. The stupidity of people who keep repeating this irrelevant critique, if it is a critique, makes me think that they just want to show how clever they are, and that they know there are some German books written about the Orient. But I would like just one of them to tell me what it is that the Germans contributed to my subject, rather than that there were some Germans who wrote about the Middle East.

I appreciate any real and coherent critique, but people such as Hourani and Rodinson, both of whom I respect, never understood the fundamental argument, which is the connection between knowledge and power. Of course both speak as Orientalists, and both have an interest in defending what they have done. I do not blame them, and I can understand their attitude. But, simply, that is not what I wrote about. The orthodox academicians who wrote about the Middle East, including Louis Massignon and Sir Hamilton Gibb, whom I admire, including many others whom I do not admire, are still the most considerable ones at present.

Take somebody like the late Albert Hourani for example.

His view of the Middle East was based on the politics of notables, the politics of a certain kind of interplay between the nationalist elite and the Imperial powers, which in a certain sense he was part of himself. He had an interest in that line of thinking which does not happen to be my own.

I can accept the critique, but I think it is still based on a misunderstanding, or an incomplete understanding, of what I was saying. Rodinson is quite scandalous as a former Stalinist, which is what he is, in his inability to understand the nature of criticism, or critique. He is not a critic, and he does not understand criticism. He is a classical philologist and antiquarian.

In your famous article, Orientalism Reconsidered, you discuss the most important and challenging set of problems pertaining to European Historicism in the heritage of Vico, Hegel, Marx, etc. Do you think your own efforts, as well as those of Hayden White, Richard Ohman, Richard Poirier, Frederic Jameson, Eqbal Ahmad, and Masao Miyoshi, can break the chain of domination of European Historicism ? Can those efforts constitute an alternative to Orientalism as an enterprise ?

I think so, and I quite agree with you. But the problem is that none of the people you mention is interested in Orientalism as an idea. Hayden White, for example, has nothing whatsoever to say about the idea. He wrote about meta-history and other things in a field of complete theory. What you need is some attempt to take theoretical procedures as put forth by the people you mentioned, and apply them somewhere other than theory and Western literary production. Masao Miyoshi, in his book *Off-Center*, tried to do that. But that is an isolated example.

I think what we need is more in our part of the world, where this new kind of criticism can begin to operate not just on an intellectual level, but on the political level as well. Furthermore, to what extent are the works of the people you mentioned known in our part of the world? There is a certain amount of

provinciality, and I will give you an example. Many of the Arab intellectuals come to America to study, and write about, the Middle East. They are not interested in the other things that are taking place. You are, for example, one of the few people who knows anything outside the field of Arabic culture and literature, while most of the people that you and I know are interested only in that. Sadik [Jalal] al-Azm, who is supposed to be a great critic, spent three years in America. All he was doing was teaching the Middle East to little Americans. This is a kind of provinciality, a narcissism so much lamentable on the part of the Arab intellectuals.

Anwar Abdel Malek did, to a certain point, achieve a considerable mastery of Western topics while keeping his Arabic focus. But then he stopped, and became interested in writing about the Middle East. We have a problem here, where the focus of attention is always on ourselves. Why don't we have more important contemporary Arab contributions to the study of France, or America or Germany? If you look at the bookshops here, you find that the Arabs are ghettoized; they write about the Arab world in French, and they are seen as native informants.

So many young intellectuals come to America from Lebanon, for example, to write a Ph.D. on Lebanon. I tell them, "Why don't you write about America? You are not here to write about yourselves. You can write about Lebanon in Lebanon. While you are here you should write about, and enter into, the debates on America that are taking place in America.

We have at present the scandalous, perhaps catastrophic, case of anthropologists (like Ernest Gellner), sociologists or specialists in political science who write extensively about the Arab world without mastering, or even knowing, the Arabic language. Don't you agree that they are worse than the 'antiquarians' of traditional Orientalism.

I quite agree with you, especially in the case of journalists.

In *The New York Times*, for example, there is a journalist whose name is Judith Miller. For more than two decades she has been writing about Islam and the Arab world, but by her own admission she does not know a single word of literary Arabic. Yet she is seen as an 'expert' on Islam, the Arab world and the Middle East.

Gellner is a striking example: An anthropologist who does not know a word of Arabic, who thinks he can talk about the Arabs and the Arab world, who writes with authority on a level of generalization that is scandalous, who is considered an authority on Morocco, and nobody challenges him! That is very common. I agree with you that they are worse than the antiquarians of the previous generation. That is why I admire people like Massignon, who was an enormously learned man, who mastered not only Arabic, but also Persian and other oriental languages, who lived among Arabs and Persians, and for him the process was a matter of dealing with a living tradition. I will give you a third example: My son took four years of Arabic at Princeton, and in his last two years he had a wonderful teacher. This man is a respected critic, very fine and intelligent. But my son was trying to speak Arabic to him, about al-Ma'arry or al-Mutanabbi; and he would reply in English. For him Arabic is like Latin or Sanskrit, a dead language, a language of the past. The absence of both native speakers and an Arab intellectual presence is very powerful. So it is a contradictory situation.

In your now classic essay, "The World, the Text, and the Critic," you discussed a "remarkably sophisticated and unexpectedly prophetic school of Islamic philosophic grammarians, whose polemics anticipate twentieth-century debates between structuralists and generative grammarians, between descriptivists and behaviorists." That was the Zahirite school of Ibn Hazm, Ibn Jinnī, and Ibn Mada' al-Qurtobi, as opposed to the Batinist school. Do you still follow that heritage?

That was the influence of Anis Frayha, who was principally a philologist. He introduced me to Andalusian *nahu* [grammar], and I became very interested in the history of Arabic linguistic thought and interpretive disputes. I would have liked to continue with it, but the pressure of time was enormous. It requires a kind of attention which at this point I do not have. But I think it is tremendously important, particularly as a way of influencing current studies in rhetoric and interpretive theories that are going on in the West without reference to this very rich Arabic tradition.

Ernest Gellner attacked your book, Culture and Imperialism (1993), and his review in the Times Literary Supplement targeted "The bogey of Orientalism," and was replete with errors of fact and misrepresentation. How do you comment ?

I did not think Gellner provided a critique of my book. It was an attack on what I represent to him. I represent somebody who, first of all, has no interest at all in his work which I find superficial, empty, sophisticated and needlessly complicated. He was trying to put himself in the picture as a man of the Right by attacking me personally. He obviously did not read the book. In regards to the parts on Algeria, I have a long discussion of Algeria, and I have French and Arabic sources on Algeria. He just did not mention it, and he also had nothing to say about Albert Camus. He was just trying to press his own theory of a series of French writers because he cannot read Arabic. He wanted to try to show that my view of Imperialism was basically a fashionable, *tiers-mondist* view of the subject, which it was not. Mine is a critique of that as well.

I think it was just a display, by Gellner, of bad temper and petty jealousy. He was simply sniping at me, and putting me down, in order to assert his own rather empty presence. The people who wrote in response, including Eqbal Ahmad and myself, exposed him as a silly man with no worthwhile views on anything that I can discover. I will tell you something which

does not appear in that correspondence in *TLS*. A few months afterward he wrote me a personal letter. He said that he realized we were going to be together in a meeting in Granada, and that we would be there at what he called an important occasion—a meeting of Arabs and Jews, one in which Arafat and Perez were going to be present, and which I did not attend. He requested, in the letter, that while we are there, could we be friendly and not carry on our disagreements too far, and meet each other in a spirit of conviviality. So I wrote back to him and I said, "Your letter was a craven and cowardly piece; be assured that if I ever see you, I shall pursue my disagreements with you as loudly and publicly as I can." I have no respect for the man. I think he is a neo-colonialist who is trying to assert the importance of the European over the native. What also bothered me is that many Arab newspapers, including *Al-Hayat*, wrote about my book and mentioned Gellner and *TLS* without realizing that *TLS* is part of the Rupert Murdoch empire, and under its present editorship is extremely right-winged, and a neo-conservative organ used ideologically to attack people like myself. People thought that this was a dispute between two scholars, which in fact it was not. It was an attack by the right-wing establishment against Left "upstarts" like myself. It has no relation to either the merits of my work or to its content.

In the same book, in regards to your reading of the French novel (André Gide, Albert Camus, Andre Malraux) against the background of both French colonialism in North Africa and the resistance poetry of Emir Abdel Kader, do you think that this contrapuntal reading an alternative to Orientalist reading ?

Absolutely. My idea is to write about the French or the European text not as an object privileged by virtue of its epistemological or geographical origin alone, but to write about it as one of several contestants in a much larger encounter, in which the native and the outsider are viewed by me as equals responding to each other. In this I privilege neither the outsider

nor the insider, but show that you cannot possibly understand Imperialism without regarding their efforts *vis-à-vis* each other, and without also understanding the relative disparity in power between them (a disparity which, in the case of the Algerians, becomes corrected with the liberation after 1962).

I think this is what is lacking in regional literary studies. You focus on America, England, or France without an adequate attention to the presence there—whether by absence, elision or deliberate understatement—of the contesting "Other." The method I am interested in, what I call *contrapuntal reading*, tries to give this some prominence.

During the Salmagundi symposium on intellectuals in power (1986), Conor Cruise O'Brien disagreed with you about the colonial content of Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Yet he himself was a pioneer in shrewdly and mercilessly exposing the connections between Camus's novels and French colonialism. O'Brien, also, supported the Israeli policies of occupation and invasion. How do you see this contradictory type of modern intellectual?

O'Brien interests me precisely because his political connections are so transparent. When he was writing about Camus in 1969, he was writing out of an anti-imperialist phase as an Irish person. By the time he had become involved with the Israelis after the 1982 invasion, his affiliation changed.

So I found that exchange you mention a very useful one because it enabled him, and me, to dramatize our political agendas and affiliations in a way that is very difficult to do with most other intellectuals who pretend they have no political affiliations, and that they are neutral and objective. So while I completely disagree with him, I lament O'Brien's degradation from the man who wrote the book on Camus, and whose involvement in Catanga and the Congo was very interesting, to somebody who has become an apologist for the neo-conservative Right and, above all, the fundamentalist

Right.

Nevertheless, I applaud the man's willingness to tell the truth about himself. He does not hide it, whereas most other intellectuals pretend they are experts and have no such affiliations, which is a lie.

You highly praise the work of Marxists like Lukács, Gramsci, Adorno, and Raymond Williams. You once said: "I have been more influenced by Marxists than Marxism, or any other ism." How do you see Marxism today?

The passage you quoted came at a period when there was still a sense of a Marxist Left with which I had had long connections, as a person influenced by them but not as a member. Since that time—in America at least, but elsewhere in the Arab world—the Marxist Left has disappeared. Now I find myself in the strange position of trying to reintroduce the question of Marxism, as something that can be restored in an eclectic way to contemporary discourse both in the Arab world and the Third World generally, and above all in America.

I feel that the Marxists, especially the kind with whom I had associations, have themselves deserted Marxism and have become post-Marxists, neo-conservatives, consumerists, or revisionists, etc. So for me the question is the revitalization of an important oppositional discourse, which now has the duty of searching for alternatives to Marxist ideology, to Neo-Pragmatism of the kind represented by people like Richard Rorty, and to the fatalistic, speculationist view of the world which is now overtaking so many intellectuals.

There is an important need to restore Marxism as a political and academic issue as related to the present crisis in education, environment, nationalism, religion and similar issues. I think it is a major challenge, and it is an open question for me as to whether it can be done or not. I find myself very seriously interested in it, and very drawn to the model provided by people like Gramsci and Williams. The question is, do they have any

validity today, or not ? In my intuitive sense, they do even more.

You pioneered an amazing process of reading, re-reading and relocating Frantz Fanon, especially in post-colonial theories of literature and criticism. How do you see his relevance ?

Well, my feeling is that the great reading of Fanon has yet to occur. There are different types of interpretation of Fanon that answer different, slightly parochial, interests: feminist, Third World, Marxist, and deconstructive readings. I started an essay on this subject entitled, "*Travelling Theory Reconsidered*," in which I look at it specifically in a certain Lukácsian aspect in regard to *Les Damnés de la terre*.

But I think the whole reading of Fanon as a coherent thinker has yet not taken place. Homi Bhabha did a very interesting reading of *Black Skin, White Masks*, which is a very good book, but is mainly sociological and biographical. I am talking about Fanon primarily as a thinker, as a man of considerable gifts and insights that go from the psychoanalytical to the existential to the Marxist to the colonial, and that still needs to be done. His relevance is astonishing, and I think the most important thing to do is to raise and discuss the following question: Would it be possible to derive from such a reading a theory of liberation, or not ?

How do you, nowadays, formulate or reformulate your famous phrase: "I think I am two people in one. Sometimes I feel I am not at home in any culture"? What does exile mean to you now?

Well, I do not think I am two separate people; I am maybe four or five. The answer has been the multiplication of interests, without regard to trying to reconcile them with each other. I have stopped doing that, and now I just assume that I am, and everyone else is as well, a contradictory and heterogeneous identity. I do not really think much about myself as a fixed

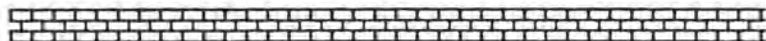
quantity, partly because of my illness. Without regard to who I am, I feel I still have a lot of things I want to do, and a lot of things I do not want to do. So I have made choices. Those things that I can do, I pursue with the realization that I am more than one person, or at least I am not a single, stable, coherent identity.

For me, the condition of exile means the freedom to pursue these choices with no regard to a fixed place. I have been to Palestine twice, in 1992 and 1993; there is now a tiny autonomous zone there commanded by the Israelis and the PLO together. But it does not really interest me, and I am not really interested in repatriation. I would prefer to be a frequent visitor, if I can, but to also be able to visit elsewhere, such as India, other parts of the East, Latin America, Australia, and so on.

So my interests have expanded beyond the Arab world, and I feel this also liberates me. Nevertheless, I am still a creature of my past, my history, and the languages and cultures from which I derive. But they are no longer for me the main reason for my existence. They are part of the large picture which I call "exile," which for me has become a relatively generous field of opportunity.

(Paris, July 1994)

* **Sobhi Hadidi** , from Syria, currently lives in Paris. is both a critic and a sociologist.



يوم الإجازة
VACATION DAY

Translated by Muna Asali van Engen

At daybreak this morning, the executioner's vacation began, and at daybreak tomorrow that vacation will end. What a wondrous, special day, and every moment of it completely his! He had not had such an opportunity since he began his job. During the course of his employment, he got married and was given a single day of vacation for his wedding. Over the course of his marriage, he was blessed with a son and was granted a day of vacation on that occasion. Later, he had a daughter and was granted the gift of another vacation day. However, those days did not resemble this vacation day, for on those previous days he had been preoccupied with the occasions at hand and did not take time to ponder his own concerns.

This vacation day was his own for self-enjoyment, a chance to escape the dark mood of his job, the stench of the cells and the shadow of the scaffold where he stood almost every day of his life, covering the heads of those about to be executed. He would pull on the rope until the body writhed in spasms and the soul departed. In the early days at his job he felt a sharp pain across his throat and his spirit sputtered inside him. Soon enough when he had done his task many times, the pain lightened and his breath settled in his chest. His life moved forward with normal contentment and satisfaction. The early nightmares moved on and were replaced by placid dreams so airy and light his memory could not even hold them until daybreak.

يوم الإجازة

مع انبلاج فجر اليوم، تبدأ إجازة الجلال.
ومع انبلاج فجر الغد، تنتهي إجازة الجلال.
يوم فريد ومختلف، مُلكٌ له بكل هنيهاته... ما حظي بمثله منذ
بدأ عمله.

أثناء ممارسة عمله تزوج قَمُنِحَ إجازة لزواجه.
وأثناء زواجه رزقَ بابن فنال يوم اجازته لابنه، ثم رزق بابنة
فحظي بيوم إجازة لابنته.
وماكانت تلك الأيام تشبه اليوم إذ انشغل فيها بمن أجزى لهم عن
نفسه.

أما اليوم فله وحده. لمتعته الذاتية، لابتعاده عن أجواء عمله
المكربة، عن الزنازين، وعن منصة الإعدام التي ظل يقف بجانبها معظم
أيام عمره، يضع الغطاء على رأس المحكوم بالإعدام، ثم يشد الحبل،
فيستفض جسد المحكوم وتفيض روحه.
في أيامه الأولى، العتيقة، كان يحس بألم مريع في عنقه، وبروح
تختنق في داخله.

وفي الأيام التي تلت صار ألمه يخف، وأخذت روحه تستقر في
بدنه... فسارت حياته برضى وقناعة، وزايلته كوابيس ليله، وصار يحلم
أحلاماً ريقة هائلة ينساها في نهاره.

A time came when his workload increased to the point that his days melted into his nights. The execution arena was always thick with people, the rope constantly taut, the heads forever awaiting to be harvested. In the days of oppression, he executed revolutionaries. In the days of the revolution, he executed the oppressors. When the revolution settled and then fragmented, he executed the leftist, and when their time came, he executed the rightists. In the days of the union, he executed the separatists. In the days of regionalism, he executed the unionists. In the time of the reaction, he executed the progressives. When the progressives led, he executed the reactionaries. During the time of the capitalists, he executed the socialists and, when the socialists led, he executed the bourgeoisie. In the time of moderation, he executed the radicals, and in the days of radicalism, he executed the liberals. During the days of fundamentalism, he chopped the heads off secularists. When the pietists ruled, he eradicated the worldly.

Each time gave birth to the next and, as each time changed, he alone remained constant, immune to change. He marvelled at the efficiency of the rope which helped him consolidate the fates of so many discordant people. But he never had time to think about his role. He could not even remember the moment when he ceased thinking about himself at all and became totally theirs. The succession of days became indifferentiable, unpunctuated by any day of rest. Then the day came when they told him, "You can enjoy a full vacation day, there are no condemned to be hanged. Go, enjoy yourself." Thus began the executioner's vacation.

وأتى عليه دهر، كشر العمل، فصار يوصل ليلاً بنهار: فساحة الإعدام مكتظة، والحبل دائم التوتر، والرؤوس مشرّبة تنتظر القطاف.
في زمن القهر كان عليه أن يعدم الثوريين. وفي زمن الثورة كان عليه أن يعدم القاهرين. وحين استقرت الثورة فتنافرت كان عليه أن يعدم ثوري اليسار، وفي زمنهم كان عليه أن يعدم ثوري اليمن. وفي زمن الوحدة أعدم الانفصاليين، وفي زمن القطرية كان عليه أن يعدم الحدويين. وفي زمن الرجعية أعدم التقدميين، وفي زمن التقدمية كان عليه أن يعدم الرجعيين. وفي أيام الرأسمالية أعدم الاشتراكيين، وفي زمن الاشتراكية أعدم البرجوازيين. وفي زمن الاعتدال أعدم الراديكاليين، وفي زمن الراديكالية أعدم الليبراليين. وفي زمن الأصولية كان عليه أن يقطع رؤوس العلمانيين، وفي زمن المتدينين كان عليه أن يجتث الدنياويين.

أزمان تتوالد من أزمان، وتتبدل، ووحده ثابت لا يتغير، ويعجب لهذا الحبل الفائت القدرة كيف يقدر أن يوحد مصير كل هؤلاء البشر المختلفين.

ولم يعد لديه وقت يتوقف ويفكر في نفسه التي نسيها حين أعطى ذاته كلياً للآخرين. وما عاد قادراً أن يفصل تتابع الأيام بيوم إجازة مختلفة... إلى أن هلّ زمان قالوا له فيه: «يمكنك أن تتمتع بيوم إجازة كاملة فليس لدينا محكومين بالإعدام.. إذهب وتمتع».
هكذا بدأ الجلال إجازته.

At dawn he awoke to birdsong and did not allow himself to hear stifled cries for mercy, and so he enjoyed it. In the morning, he walked to the seashore and did not allow himself to watch waves flowing with blood, and so he enjoyed them. At noon, he went to the garden and did not allow himself to see flowers as withered heads bobbing on their stems, so he felt joy. In the evening, he entered a forest and did not allow himself to see trees as dangling bodies, limbs as beseeching arms, and so he enjoyed the trees. At night, he stayed up staring into the darkness, and did not allow himself to see the blackness of prison cells, and so he enjoyed the night.

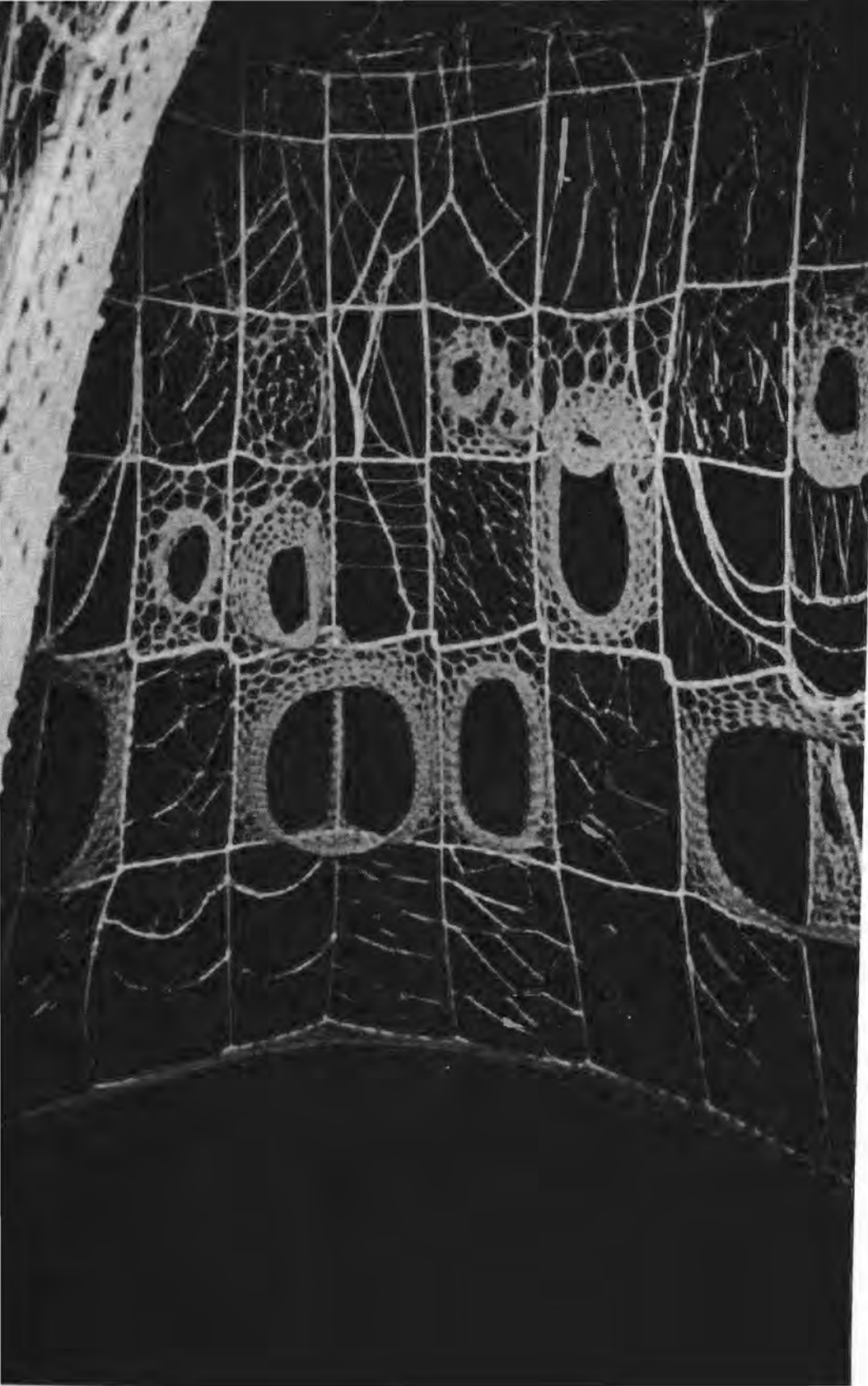
His spirit stayed calm and he took pleasure in every moment of his day, until the joy reached its crescendo, and he grew sleepy and bid his wife and children goodnight. His son and daughter also slept, but his wife stayed awake, anxious and doubtful, muttering, "We don't want to lose him—I begged him not to take a vacation—I begged him." Yet she left him in his peaceful slumber until dawn on the night of this, his only vacation day.

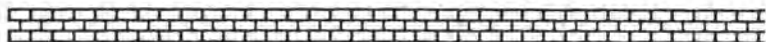
At dawn she walked to the door of his room to wake him for work as usual. She wrestled with her premonitions until she stood in front of his door and then she paused. Slowly, she pushed the door and it gave way. She stood there, unsurprised to find the executioner absent from his bed. She was not even surprised to see his corpse hanging by a rope from the ceiling.

Jamal Abu Hamdan

***Jamal Abu Hamdan** is a leading Jordanian fictionist. The recipient of many national and Arab literary prizes, some of his works have been translated into French and English.

عند الفجر، استيقظ على تغريد الطيور، ومنع نفسه أن يُسمعها
استغاثات مخنوقة.. فاستمتع.
عند الصباح، ذهب إلى البحر ومنع نفسه أن ترى في أمواجه
دماء دفاقة... فاستمتع.
عند الظهر، دخل حديقة ومنع نفسه أن يرى الأزهار رؤسا
ذابلة... فاستمتع.
عند المغرب ذهب إلى غابة ومنع نفسه أن يرى الأشجار أجسادا
متدلية والأغصان أيادي تستغيث... فاستمتع.
في المساء سهر تحت الليل الساجي، ومنع نفسه أن يرى فيه ظلمة
الزنازين... فاستمتع.
وظل ريق النفس، مستمتعا طوال يومه بكل هنيهة فيه إلى أن
بلغ استمتاعه الذروة، فأحس بالنعاس واستأذن زوجته وابنه وابنته..
ودخل غرفته لينام.
ونام الإبن والإبنة..
أما الزوجة فظلت ساهرة، قلقة بهواجسها، ثم رددت تمتمة:
«لأنريد أن نخسره. رجوته أن لا يأخذ إجازة. رجوته...»
لكنها تركته لإغفائه الهانئة في يوم إجازته الوحيد حتى الفجر.
عند الفجر خطت إلى باب غرفته لتوقظه للذهاب إلى عمله.
تعثرت بهواجسها حتى وقفت أمام الباب. ترددت
ثم دفعت الباب، فانفتح.
وقفت، ولم تُفاجأ، إذ لم تجد الجلاذ في سريره.
ولم تُفاجأ حين رأت جثته تتدلى بحبل من سقف الغرفة.
جمال أبو حمدة





WHY HAVE YOU LEFT THE HORSE ALONE

The Phases of Inat

Poetry is our ladder to a moon
Inat over her garden hangs
Like a mirror for lovers without hope,
As she goes into her deserts of the soul,
Two women never to be reconciled,
One woman bringing back water to the fountain,
Another driving fire to the forests.
As for the horses,
Let them dance for a long time
Over two bottomless pits,
Where there is neither death nor life,
While my poem is but Inat,
The foaming of the mouth at death,
The animal's cry
In its high ascent
And its steep descent.
Inat, I want you both together,
In love and war, and find myself in Hell,
For I love you.
Inat kills herself, in herself,
And for herself then recreates the distance,

So that before her distant image
May pass all creatures
Over Mesopotamia and Syria,
And all the regions may obey

The lapis sceptre and the Virgin's ring.
Inat, linger not in the underworld!
Come back to nature, back to us!
The wells have dried up after you;
After your death, the streams and rivers have dried up,
The tears evaporated from the clay jar,
The air cracked in its dryness,
Like cracking wood,
And we broke down over your absence,
Like a breaking fence.
Our desires have dried up,
Our prayers calcified.
After your death, nothing lives,
For life has died like the words
Among those who journey to Hell,
Therefore, stay no longer in the underworld, Inat!
Perhaps, in your absence, new goddesses
 have come down to us,
And we have accepted the mirage.
Perhaps the wily shepherds have found
A goddess in the dusty air,
And the priestesses have accepted her.

Therefore, come back, and bring back
The land of truth, direct and indirect,
The land of the first Canaan,
The land of your public breasts
And of your public thighs,
So that the miracles may return
To Jericho,
To the door of the deserted temple,

Where there is neither death nor life,
Only confusion at doomsday's door,
Where no future comes, and no past returns
To bid goodbye,
Where no memories from Babylon
Fly over our palm-tree,
And no dream keeps us company,
So that we may live in a star
Which is a button of your dress, Inat!

Inat creates herself, from herself,
And for herself and flies after
The ships of the Greeks,
Under another name,
Two women never to be reconciled.
As for the horses,
Let them dance for a long time
Over two bottomless pits,
Where there is neither death nor life,
There, where I neither live nor die,
Where there is neither Inat
Nor Inat.

(Translated by Husain Haddawy)

O Helen, What a Rain!

I met Helen on Tuesday,
At three o'clock,
The hour of endless tedium,
But the sound of the rain
With a woman like Helen
Was a hymn to the journey.

O what a rain,

What longing,
The longing of heaven for itself,
What moaning,
The moaning of the wolves for their kind!

Rain on the roof of desiccation,
The gilded desiccation in the icons of the churches.
The stranger says to Helen,
The bread vendor,
"How far is earth from me,
And how far is love from you?"
The stranger says to Helen
In a street as narrow as her stocking,

"There is only a single word and rain,
Rain hungry for the trees,
Rain hungry for the stones."

The stranger says to the bread vendor,
"Helen, Helen,
Does the aroma of the bread rise up now from you
To a balcony in a distant land
To stand for Homer's words?
Does the water rise up from your shoulders
Through the dry trees of a poem?"

Helen replies, "O what a rain! What a rain!"

The strangers says to her,
"I lack narcissus, to gaze in the water,
Your water in my body.
O Helen, gaze in the water of our dreams,
And you will find on your banks
The dead, those who have perished for your sake.
O Helen, Helen

Do not leave us alone,
As lonely as the moon."

She replies, "O what a rain!
What a rain!"

The stranger says to her,
I used to fight in your twin trenches;
You will never be absolved of my Asiatic blood,
You will never be absolved of the obscure blood
In your roses' veins, O Helen!
How cruel were the Greeks of that time,
And how fond of travel was wild Ulysses,
He who journeyed on, looking for his legend!"

What I did not say to Helen
I said, and what I said
I did not say,
But Helen knows what the stranger fails to say
And knows what he says to the aroma
Scattered in the rain.
So she says to him,
"The war of Troy never way,
Never was,
Never."

O what a rain!

What a rain!

(Translated by Husain Haddawy)

As He Walks Away

The enemy who drinks tea
in our shack, has a horse in smoke,
a daughter with thick eyebrows,
brown eyes, and long hair
over her shoulders like a night
of songs. He's never without
her picture when he comes
to drink our tea. But he neglects
to tell us about her evening chores,
about a horse
the songs left on the hilltop.

Relaxing in our hut, the enemy
leaves his rifle over my grandfather's
chair. He eats our bread
like any guest. He dozes off
for a while in the wicker chair,
and, stooping to pat our cat's fur,
he always says, "Don't blame the victim."
"And who might that be?" we ask
And he says, "Blood that the night will not dry."

His coat- buttons flash
as he walks away. Good evening
to you! Say hello to our well,
to the fig trees. Step softly upon our shadow
in the barley fields. Greet our pines
on high. And don't leave the gate open
at night. Don't forget the horse's terror
of the airplanes. And greet us there,
if you find the time.

This that we wished to say
at the doorstep, he hears, hears well

but muffles with a rapid cough,
and waves aside. Then why does he visit
the victim every evening, memorize our
proverbs, like us, by heart and repeat
our hymns about our dates
in the holy place?
The flutes would have played together
if it weren't for the gun.

As long as the earth inside us
turns around itself, the war will not end.
Let's be good then. He asked us to be good,
here. And recites Yeats's poem about the *Airman*:
"Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love."
Then he would leave our wooden shack
and walk eighty meters to our stone house
out there, on the edge of the plain.

Greet our house, stranger.
Our coffee cups are still the same.
Can you smell our fingers on them?
Can you tell your daughter with the braid
and thick eyebrows, that she has an absent friend
who wishes to visit her, just to enter
her mirror, see his secret: how did she,
after him, trace his age in his place?
Say hello to her, if you will
find the time...

This that we wished to tell
him, he heard, heard well
but muffled with a rapid cough,
and waved aside. Then
his coat buttons flash
as he walks away...

The Tatars' swallows

The sky is the size of my horses
I dreamt of what would happen in the afternoon
The Tatars used to rove beneath me and beneath the sky
Dreaming of nothing beyond their pitched tents
Knowing nothing of the fates of our goats
 in the coming winter storms

The night is the size of my horses
The Tatars used to imbed their names into the
 village ceilings like swallows
And sleep safely among our sprouting wheat
They did not dream what would happen in the afternoon
Waiting for the sky to return little by little
 to its kinsmen in the night

We have one dream
That the friendly breezes might blow
the aroma of Arabian coffee
to our hills surrounded
 by summer and strangers

I am my dream
So when the earth squeezes tight
I expand it on swallows' wings
and expand myself with it

I am my dream
In the ebb of people I flowed along
With self-mirroring and questions
On planets that revolve on the feet of my beloved
In my solitude there are paths
To a Jerusalem of words
Plucked like feathers on stones
How many prophets does the city need

To preserve the name of its father and regret:
"I fell without war?"
How many heavens need be replaced by every nation
For the city to admire its crimson shawl
O my dream!
Don't look at us like that!
Don't be the last martyr!

I'm afraid for my dream with its butterfly clarity
And from its mulberry stains on a horse's whinny
I fear for my dream from the father as well as the son
From those who pass by the Mediterranean
searching for gods
And ancestral gold
I fear for my dream from my own hands
And from a star perched on my shoulder
Waiting to burst into song

As people of ancient nights, we have our ways
For climbing to the moon of rhyme
We believe our dreams and deny our days
For we haven't owned our days since the
time of the Tatars...
See, the Tatars are getting ready to decamp
Leaving our days behind. and after a while
We'll be able to go down
To full lifetimes in our fields
And sew our flags from white bedsheets.
If a flag is necessary, let it be naked,
unwrinkled by symbols.
And let us be calm
So as not to fly our dreams in the sky behind
caravans of strangers

Our one dream:
To find a dream that carries us
as stars carry the dead!

(Translated by Tahia Khaled Abdalnasser)

The Well

One cloudy day I pass by the old well
Perhaps it fills up with heaven
Perhaps it flows out beyond meaning
And the parable the shepherd told
I will drink one handful of its water
And greet all the dead around it:
Peace be unto you who have
 remained by the well
In butterfly puddles!

I scrape the yellow herb *Inula* from a stone:
Peace be unto you O little stone
Maybe we were bird's wings
still hurting
Peace be unto you O moon
hovering around its image
But never submerging!

I salute the cypress:
Beware what the dust tells you
Maybe we were fiddle strings
In the banquet of the
 blue sky's guardians
Maybe we were a lover's arms!

I used to walk by my own side:
Be strong O my mate!
Raise the past as if lifting
 a goat by the horns with your bare hands
Sit near your well
Maybe the valley's stags will turn and face you.

And the voice loomed,
Your voice -- petrified image of the broken moment
I have yet to complete my dropping in on oblivion
I have not taken all my heart's tools with me
 My bell on the pine winds
 My ladder propped up against heaven
 My stars at roof-height
 My hoarseness from old salt-sting

I said to memory:
Peace be unto you O grandmother's gossip
Taking us to white days beneath slumber
My name rings like an antique gold dinar
At the edge of the well
I hear the desolation of ancestors
Like an "abode of ruin"
Between the calling of my name's "*Maaah*"
 and the "*moood*" of its second syllable
I safeguard my pet fox
I know I shall return alive in a matter of hours
From the well where I met
Neither Joseph nor his brothers'
 fear of reverberating echoes

Beware!
Here next to the well's edge
Your mother left you
And moved on to whispered incantation
Do whatever you wish with yourself

Do whatever you wish with yourself
I did what I wished with myself:
I grew up darkly between the sides of a triangle:
Egypt
Syria
And Babylonia

Right here
Alone
I grew up without agrarian goddesses
(They were busy washing pebbles
In an olive grove
moist with dew)

And I found that I had stumbled upon myself
next to a snake
During the caravan journey
And nothing could be completed
But my ghost
The Land expelled me from itself
My own name pings in my steps like a horseshoe
Come close
So I may travel
in your name
From this void to you
O eternal Gilgamesh!

Be my brother
Come with me
to Call on the old well
Perhaps like a woman
It fills up with heaven

And with becoming
While waiting for my own birth
From my first well!

We will drink a handful of its water
We will say to all the dead around it:
Peace be unto you
You who live in butterfly puddles
And you who are dead
peace be unto you

(Translated by Ferial Ghazoul)



POINT OF DEPARTUR

*Set out from any point. They are all
alike. They all lead to a point of departure
--Antonio Porchia*

1

Take as point of departure this
oboe note like a crystal rosebud
blooming in the palm of your right hand held still for a
microsecond in a straight ray of zonked blue sunlight.

Take this
point oriented east of north twenty degrees
as the hub of all earthly possibilities
from which anything occurs. Throaty and
deep undersea chords of a respectable
death by drowning, coral crown built up to the
sunny surface replacing the top of your skull
in a wavering mirror of dark currents
coiling at the base of
industrious continents.

This could be the stepping-off point for all of us,
the secret hatchway to generalized Ascension.
We might all take off at once into that sphere!

جاننيال مور المنطلق

-١-

فلنبداً رحلتنا من هذا اللحن القصبي
يتفتح في راحتك اليمنى
بللورا يتبرعم مخطوف الوهلة مبهوتا
تحت شعاع الشمس الفيروزي الناحل
فلنبداً رحلتنا من نقطة
تتوجه شرقاً نحو شمال الدرجة عشرين
مصروراً فيها سائر مافي دنيانا من ممكن
فيها يجري سائر ما يجري في الأرض.
ترنيم من قيعان البحر لموت الفرقى
موت جلال، والتاج معد للسطح البحري الشمس
من مرجان يستبدل شعفة جمجمتك
في مرآة تتراعى فيها تيارات مظلمة تلتف
تحت أساس القارات الصناعية.
لربما تكون هذه مرقأتنا، بابنا السحري، معراجنا.
وربما أننا كلنا نبحر في تلك السماء.

2

Or take as point of departure this
single ant on the bathroom floor at my
feet as I
sit on the toilet amazed, this creature no
bigger than an
eyelash with legs goes
lickety-split in one direction, stops, feels, turns
180°, goes off in a new direction, stops, doubles
back, goes straight, pauses,
resumes, stops and trundles back in the
original direction again with intense dedication, and I
imagine a scum one or two molecules
high this ant can see that I can't, the whole
tile floor microscopically
criss-crossed with interesting
trails to this ant, who makes
choices, decisions -- I put my belt-tip near it,
it sniffs but doesn't climb, goes
off in a new direction! Tiny tininess, eyes and
feelers, feet going like crazy, perfectly
normal for an ant,
and above it on the huge toilet a scanning
human looking down with eyeballs bigger than
it is, one foot-stamp and it's
gone, dear thing, which I
do *not* do, it flashes through my mind, but I reject it.
Just as this oblivious creature never sees more of
me than a few edges, rejects one direction, one
smell, one possible trail --
goes off in another.

-٢-

أو دعنا نبدأ رحلتنا من غلة
تسمى ما بين القدمين
متوحدة في أرض «الحمام»
وأنا أقعي مذهولا فوقه،
فلهذا المخلوق الأضال من هدب العين
سيقان تمضي مسرعة في وجهتها، أو تقف،
تتحسس ثم تدور نصف الدورة
ماضية كالسهم في وجهتها الأخرى، إجماع يتبعه إقدام
تقف وتُفقل هرولة حيث انطلقت،
وأنا أتخيلها تبصر ما لا أبصر من رغبة
الرغبة ليست أعلى من خردلة أو خردلتين
وترى في مجهرها كل سطوح بلاط الحمام دروبا
وممرات تتقاطع، وتميزها،
يا للنملة! تختار وتعزم وتقرر ..
ها إني أرخيت قريبا منها رأس حزامي
تتشممه! لم تتسلقه ولكن ولت جهة أخرى
يا الضالّتها، بعيون ومجسات، يا للأقدام
تسمى بجنون، أقدام عاقلة - في منطقها، وهناك
فوق المرحاض المرتفع الضخم؛
إنسان يتملاها، مقلته أكبر منها. خطوة
واحدة، تمحقها وتغيب عن العين،
لكني لا أفعلها
هاهي تلمح في الخاطر لكني لا أقبلها.
هذا المخلوق الغافل لا يبصر مني غير حواف عدة
هاهو يرفض جهة أو ينكر رائحة، ويدب
دبيبا يتلاشى في إثر دبيب.

3

To take as point of departure

anything or anywhere -- what an idea!

We come into this world on a wave,

we go out on a wave, a big white ocean

flows through the boundaries on either

side, a bright green triangular moon at the close end,

a flashing blue sun at the far end with

bubbling black surf sizzling beneath it

as we let out a great whooping shout as we,

wildly waving, flow out!

I mean, here I sit in space isolated in much the same way as

the ant in the second part of this poem, myself not much

more than an eyelash with legs,

having come from somewhere -- indecisively

poised over a hologram of the

Great Wall of China just below me

beaming pale yellow light

as it zigzags and snakes over those

hills barren as iron from one

bald Chinese province to another--

going somewhere, or nowhere,

parasols of various heavens painted with

various weathers overhead.

We jot down stars, we breathe the

silken threads of the

Milky Way of this galaxy --

do we hope for an Epiphany so great and

vast, blasting us at once through so many

dimensions of extraterrestrial rainbow overcoats that when we
come back we won't have to do the dishes ever again, or dust?

We come back, our frail arms and legs draped with

the gangly crêpe paper of Paradise, roll up our

sleeves and sink hairy arms up to their

elbows in dishwater suds, drawing out

-٣-

أن نبدأ رحلتنا من «أين»
أن نبدأها من هذا أو ذاك الشيء. -- بالفكرّة!

ندخل هذا العالم في موجة

نخرج من هذا العالم في موجة

ومحيط بياض متسع يترامى وغيض

على كل جوانبه. قمر أخضر بثلاثة أضلاع يتلألأ في الغرب

شمس زرقاء ترمض في البعد بأمواج معتمة ترغر

وتفرقع حين تدوي صرختنا المتحشجة إذا

موجنا المرح وتنداح وتملو.

هأنذا مثل النملة، أجلس في متعزلي، أضال من هدب العين

وكما النملة جئت أنا أيضا من ذاك «الآين»

أترجح في «بنذولي»، تحتي سور الصين يشع بضوء

منكسر أصفر يلعب أو يتأفقي كحديد أعمى بين هضاب الصين

من منطقة جرذا، إلى منطقة جرذا،

منطلق نحو «الآين» ونحو «اللا آين». وفي عليين

مُشائس من ألف سماء وسماء تتزين بجناحات وطقوس مختلفة.

هأنحن نعد نجوما ونجوما، نتنفس من خيطان حرير مجرنا-

«درب التبانة»، هل من معجزة خارقة تنشرنا- في آن- في أبعاد

متعددة لعباءات سماعات قوزجية

فإذا عدنا لا نحتاج إلى غسل صحون أو نقض غبار؟

ستعود وزينة أيدينا المجنونة من ورق الفردوس حرير

نطوي الأكمام ونُفرك أذرعنا المشعّرة إلى مفرقها

في رغبة مائة الصابون لنخرج صحن صفيح

a tin plate so battered it won't ever reflect our
face again, setting it on its side in the
sun so all those
pearls of moisture will
evaporate into pure air again.
Point of departure! Everything
sinks back into the elements, drawn out and
down great hallways to the
Source-shop of atomic formulations from
seraphic stuff into hard matter,
angel fingertips wetted and drawn across each
material surface to make it emit a
celestial music as it
serves its perfectly practical purpose
wiling away its time down here
on the whirling earth,
earth, our point of entrance, our
single point of departure.

4

Taking as point of departure
the Great Wall of China, if you
happen to be standing on it, in one of its
guard towers, hearing the antique moans of one of the
men buried deep in its stones --
taking as point of departure one of the great
historic moments, the founding of a
nation, men dressed in their
best leaning over a charter with gold pens poised,
eyes shining with as-yet-unrealized
idealisms and as-yet-untamished
hopes, if you
happen to be one of them, or one of the surrounding ones,
or even the servants waiting out in the hall --
taking as point of departure
the saint's armchair, the silken pillow used for his

معطوب لا يترأى فيه الوجه،
نسندة في وجه الشمس على حاقته لتطير لآلىء أندائه
في طلق الريح.
كل ما عليها عائد إلى «العناصر» من جديد
فهو في كر وفر،
ماضيا نحو أصول كل صيغ النوى؛
من خلقة الملائكة إلى طبيعة الحديد.
هنا ترى أنامل الملاك
ندية تمس وجه كل «مادة» فتصدح موسيقا السماء
منها وتبدع الأشياء
مُزجِية زمانها في أرضنا؛ مدخلنا
ووحدها نقطة ارتحاننا.

—٤—

لو صادف أن نبدأ رحلتنا من سور الصين
وأنت على حافة برج من أبراج حراسته
تسمع أنات غابرة من رجل مدفون تحت حجارته
في الأعماق. ولو صادف أن نبدأ رحلتنا
من واحدة من لحظات التاريخ العظمى
عند ولادة أمة
ورجال في أبهى الحلل، مكبّين على «الميثاق»
بأقلام الذهب، وفي أعينهم يتلأأ
مالم يتحقق من آمال بعد وما لا يتحقق من أوهام ومثاليات.
لو صادف أنك منهم أو من أفراد الحاشية
حواليهم أو في القاعة بين الخدام
لو صادف أن نبدأ رحلتنا من كرسي القديس
حرير وسادة قدميه

feet, or the windowsill upon which
doves pecked the bread-crumbs he left for them each afternoon,
if you happen to be near him or near
 where he was not long after his
 point of departure --

Ah, taking as point of departure
any holy, antique, well-trod or even
 virgin path or place,
 situation, holy or unholy, ancient or
new, hallowed or unhallowed by being
thought of by us as a point of departure, exactly
where we are now, since every
 nook of space and cranny of time is
 packed with angels, luminous
doers and tellers and scribes of any
action of ours, whispering
 scintillation of the actual air –

we set out from here, this is our point of departure.
This "here" is our horizon, our
encapsulated vista of realizable landscape,
first step toward ecstatic transfiguration into
peacock-tailed magnificent nothingness, our first
step at a
 crossroads of spectacular energy,
our heart scooped out like a large papaya and replaced with
 divine filling,

our uncritical, careless trilling rapture like the
dawn birds now on their momentary branches outside my door,

أو من إفريز الشباك المعروش حماما
يلتقط كسارة خبز القديس ومايرميه له كل ظهيرة
لو صادق أن كنت هناك قريباً منه
قبل رحيله.

آه، دعنا نبدأ رحلتنا من أي مقدس
أو مما هو غابر، من أي طريق سالكة أو بكر منسية،
نبدأ رحلتنا من أية حال قدسية
أو لا قدسية،

من أي قديم أو أي جديد،
مكرس أو لا، للبدء في رحلتنا هنا، والآن
فكل نقطة من المكان

وكل لحظة من الزمان صرة الملائكة
ذاكرة مضيئة لكل ما تُبدى أو نُعيد
من هنا ننشر القلوع، نبدأ الرحيل.

فهذه «الهنّا» أفقتنا، بللور حلمنا، وعتبة
نخرج منها نحو عدم بهي يتمخطر فيه الطاووس
هذه «الهنّا» مفترق يضحك بالحياة، قلبنا المشحور
مثل فاكهة البايابا،

حتى تحل فيه مضغة السماء
وهذه «الهنّا» طرنا الأمجن من نشوة الطيور
في أغصانها فجرا وراء باب بيتي

no inhibitions in those
bird-yelps, leaps, loops, bips, bleeps,
blasts of song, long and short
take-offs and
landings, each hover
and landing a new departure point, each
point of departure a
new flight.

فكله مباح:
عزيفها ورقصها الرشيق والزيق زيق وسورة الغناء
تغريدها السريع والبطيء*
طيرانها، هبوطها، كله منطلق جديد
لارتحالنا، وكل منطلق
عرد إلى التحليق.

دانيال مور

(ترجمة منير العكش)

* Daniel MOORE whose Muslim name is Abd al-Hayy, is a leading American poet. Among his publications he has had 2 books of poetry: *Dawn Visions* and *Burnt Heart, an Ode to the War Dead* published by the renowned City Lights Books of San Francisco.



Muhammed Al-Rakoui. *Home* (Prison's art), 1989

Songs of Palestine

Shaligram Shukla

Filistîn kē gît **SONGS OF PALESTINE**

UNDER SKY ROOFS

Under sky roofs
we built walls of sand,
pillars of wind,
windows of the sun,
and proclaimed them
our symbols, our homes.

"No, this won't do," said our fathers,
digging deep trenches,
covering them with branches.
"This is our new home,
these are our new symbols.
This is where we'll wait, this is where we'll wait."

Now, centuries have passed
shivering, burning, sleeping, remaining awake,
reading the sky through leafless mistakes,
watching our youths in foul trenches
bleed their last light on iron benches.
We bleed and wait, we bleed and wait.

أغاني فلسطين

شاليجرام شكلاه

ترجمة أميرة الزين

تحت سقوف السماء
تحت سقوف السماء
عمرنا جدراننا من رمل
أعمدة من ربح
ونوافذ من شمس
وجعلناها رايات وديارا.

قال أبي عن جدي: «لا، هذا عبث لا يُجدي»
الأولى أن نحفر في الأرض خنادق.. ونعمقها
بالأغصان نموها
«نسكنها، نجعلها رايات وديارا
وهنا نسكن .. وهنا نبقي» .

الآن، وقد غبر الدهر علينا، وتشظينا
بعد قرون عشناها، ملتهبين، نياما، مازلنا
أيقاظا، نقرأ في آثامنا العارية السماء
وفي خنادق الهوان
نرى فتياننا يتزف منهم الضوء الأخير
فوق منصات الحديد.
ونحن ندمى ونتنظر.. ندمى ونتنظر.

JUST BEFORE DYING

Just before their death
the wrath of our fathers
joins the angry red moon
and inflames the sky.

On flinging rocks
are cut the names of men
whose arms can embrace no more
when women cry.

Steel melts in our veins
when mothers beg,
"Avenge your fathers
under the angry red moon."

Enemies dance
under the angry red moon.
Tragedy lingers
under the angry red moon.

قبيل موتهم

قبيل موتهم،

القمر الملهب الغاضب

يعانق الأجيح من لوعة الآباء

ويضرم النيران في السماء

على وجوه هذه الحجارة المنطلقة

نُقشتْ أسماء رجال

لم تعد زنودهم قادرة على العناق

عندما تبكي النساء.

تذيب في عروقنا الحديد أمهات

كلما بكين واستصرخن:

« الثأر للآباء.. الثأر للآباء

تحت القمر الملهب الغاضب ».

ويرقص الأعداء

تحت القمر الملهب الغاضب

وتطول ظلال المساء

تحت القمر الملهب الغاضب

WE ARE PROUD CITIZENS

We are proud citizens
in the forest of time.
Don't think us as wild beasts,
or cruel snares.

With liquid fire in our veins
we're weapons,
we're dark bowmen of troubled dreams,
and scorched earth of many nightmares.

Our hammer hands strike
our time like an anvil,
while our murdered fathers in the sky
watch us from honest wooden chairs.

ما أُمحِزنا من مواطنين
نحن مواطنون في غابة الزمان
وما أعزنا. إياك أن تظن أننا
من السباع والوحوش الضارية
أو أننا مصيدة قاتلة.

باللهب الذي يسيل في عروقنا
نصير أسلحة، نصير
نشابة سمرا عراهم الجنون
ويلسعون الأرض بالأهوال والمنون

لنا سواعد قوية تمعن طرقا في الزمان
كأنه السندان
وفي السماء يرقبنا آباؤنا الشهداء
على أرائك بيضاء

IN EARLY MORNING

In early morning
with the approach of the day
my arms tremble, tremble my feet.

At noon I am the groom
in the high drama
of a blood-wedding in the street.

In the afternoon
plans for tomorrow
invade my thoughts.

And the dark lonely night
invites me through the door of grief
to meet death by a lonely cot.

مع ارتعاشة الصباح
مع ارتعاشة الصباح
يدب في سواعدي ارتعاش
وقدماى أيضا ترعشان.

وعندما ينتصف النهار
فأنا العريس في الطريق
أزف في خضم عرس الدم

وعندما يعصر النهار
تجتاحني الهموم
هموم خطتي وعدتي للغد

ثم إن الليل بوحشته وحلكنه
يشرع لي بوابة الأسى
يسألني عناق الموت في مضجعي الأعزل.

THE LORDS OF OUR LAND

The lords of our land,
the lords of our sky,
the masters of our waters,
the producers of our fate

stare at our faces
and then lift our bodies
and throw them in pits
like loads of hate.

Then while spirals of grief
rise in our homes, in our streets,
the lords of our land sweat on white sheets
and use goose-down pillows to mate.

أُرباب أرضنا
يا أرباب أرضنا،
يا أرباب سمائنا،
ياسادة مياهنا،
ياصانعي مصيرنا

حدقوا في وجوهنا
ثم ارفعوا أجسادنا
ألقوا بها في الهاوية
وأفرغوا صدوركم من الكراهية

آنَ يدوم الأسى ويقتلي
في بيوتنا ودرونا
ينعم أرباب أرضنا فوق ملاحف بيضاء
وعلى الحشايا من ريش الإوز يعشقون

THEN CAME THE WHISPER

Then came the whisper
"I'm coming too, please wait for me."
He waited for her.

The sun was high and mighty.
The quiet road stretched—
an endless eternity.

They were surprised to be caught
when a jeep came racing,
and then came to a full stop.

"You have no right to live,
you're evil, dangerous, and wretched,"
barked a man from the jeep.

And then, in a flash
took off the head of the woman
and threw it in a heap of trash.

Then he took off the head of the man
and placed it in a bucket, and drove
staring at it again and again.

"You had no right to live,
you're evils dangerous, and wretched,"
barked the man in the racing jeep.

ثم جاء الهمس
ثم جاء الهمس
«وأنا قادمة، بريك انتظر»
وهكذا انتظر.
كانت الشمس في قرص السماء وهاجة
والدرب الهاديء باسط
أبدية خالدة
ولقد ذهلا .. أن يُعتقلا
حين دعت «جيب» مسرعة كالبرق
وقفت عندهما، ينبح منها رجل:
«دمكم مهدور، يا أشرار
يا قتلة ،
يا أولاد العار»
ويلمحة عين خاطفة
يرمي رأس المرأة فوق كومة القمامة
ورأس زوجها ألقاه في وعاء،
ومضى به في «الجيب» لا يشفى له غليل
مسرعا كالبرق، ينبح منها:
«دمكم مهدور، يا أشرار
يا قتلة ،
يا أولاد العار».

STORMS OF SONG

Storms of song and laughter
will someday fill our valley,
until then, sad shadows sleep.

Do not cry over the death
of the hawks, and doves.
Do not fear cracked mirrors
on the wall of love.

Storms of song and laughter
will someday fill our homes,
until then, sad shadows sleep.

Our children cry, day-long,
they sob all night when asleep.
Beneath the blood-stained earth
a hundred heroes weep.

Storms of song and laughter
will someday fill our orchard,
until then, sad shadows sleep.

عواصف الخناء
ستهب في ودياننا ، ذات يوم
عواصف من الغناء والضحك
لكن مسحة الأحزان قبلها لن تفارق الوديان

لاتذرفوا الدموع
على الحمام والصقور الميتة
لا تجزعوا من تكسر المرايا
على جدار الحب

ستهب في ودياننا ، ذات يوم
عواصف من الغناء والضحك
لكن مسحة الأحزان قبلها لن تفارق الوديان

أطفالنا يقضون سحابة النهار في البكاء
وينشجون في منامهم حتى الصباح
فألف بطل يخنقه النواح
في بطن تلك الأرض تحت بقع الدماء

ستهب في ودياننا ، ذات يوم
عواصف من الغناء والضحك
لكن مسحة الأحزان قبلها لن تفارق الوديان

IN THIS OLD LAND OF PAIN

In this old land of pain
and nights of wounded deeds,
where sleep never comes easily
men die amidst rocks and weeds.

Surrounded by their knives
I have lost my thought and reason.
Don't know living from dying
Don't know season from season.

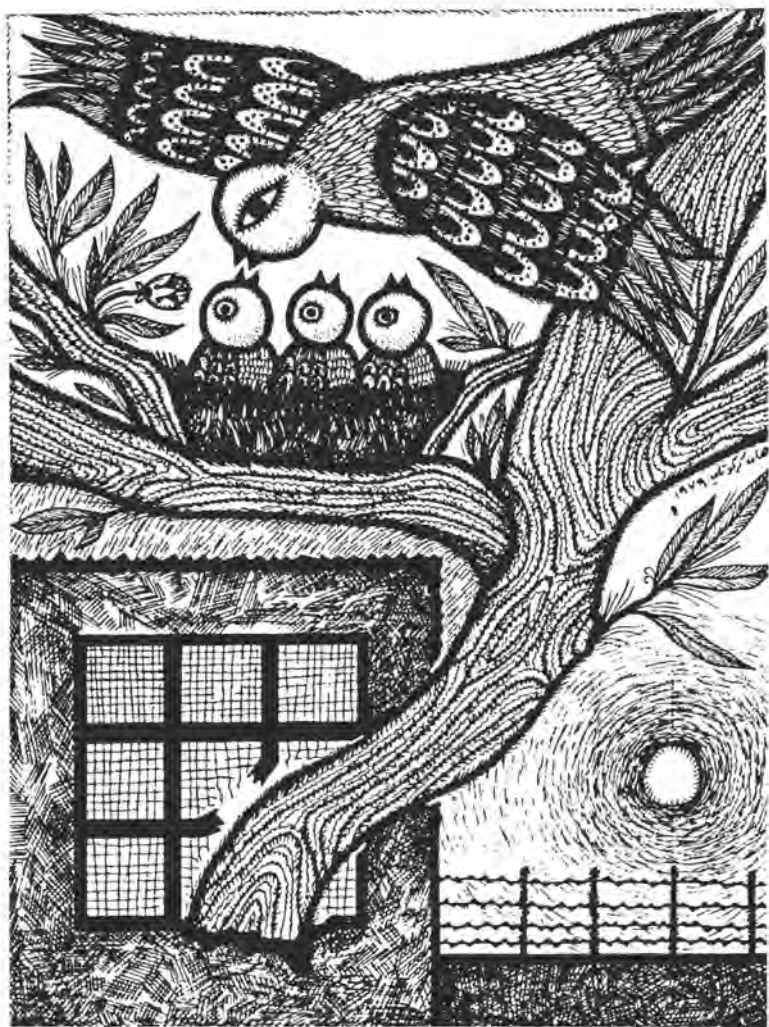
In this old land of pain
will I ever be free from fears?
Will these eyes ever drink your face
and break into sweet hot tears?

- * Shaligram Shukla is currently a member of the linguistics faculty at Georgetown University, where he teaches Sanskrit, Comparative, and Anthropological linguistics. He is known in India for his Hindi fiction and poetry. For the past several years, he has been writing about the Palestinian situation in various Indian literary journals. One of the significant things that came out of this anguishing experience was a collection of 101 poems called *Philistine ke gīt* ('Songs of Palestine') in Hindi. In the original these poems are songs, which can be sung. In their English translation the writer could not render the music, and some of the sharpness of the images and feelings are gone. In Hindi, these poems are much more direct, like knives or rocks.

ففي أرض الآلام
في هذه الأرض العريقة الآلام
وفي لياليها الجريحة
حيث لا يغمض جفن أو ينام
يتساقط الرجال بين الصخور والأعشاب

وعندما تحيط بي مُداهم
يطير مني القلب والصواب
ويستوي لدي الموت والحياة
والصيف والشتاء

في هذه الأرض العريقة الآلام
ألن أعيش يوما دون خوف
ولم لا ترتوي يوما من وجهك العيون
ثم تريق بعدها دموعها الساخنة العذاب



Burhan Karkutli. *Free Palestinian prisoners*. Ink, 1979



THE ISRAELI INTIFADA!

Excerpts from *Poetry of the Palestinian Intifada*

Edited By Naseer Aruri and Reja-e Busailah

Dan Almagor

WE SHOOT CHILDREN TOO, DON'T WE?

Most of these people truly desire
to harvest their olive trees
as they have for hundreds of years.
Most of these people truly desire
to raise their kids
not to throw stones
or Molotov cocktails;
but to study in peace,
to play in peace,
and raise a flag.
A flag, their own flag.
And facing that flag, to cry
as we did, that night, then, excited as we were.
And we have no, have no, have no
right in the world to rob them of this desire.
This flag,
these tears.
These tears which always, always
come after all the others.

* * *

Let us start preparing our defense.
We will need it soon enough:
those who actually did it
and those who still do.
All those who hushed it up
and those who still do.
And those who said nothing
and those who clucked their tongues, saying,
"Something must be done, really;
(but not tonight. I have a concert,
a gala event,
a birthday !).
Indeed, we'll all get our summons one day
for the colonels' trials.

* * *

The colonels' trials are coming.
Their time will come, it must be so.
Their trials of the generals, the colonels,
and the division, the battalion,
and the platoon commanders.
There is no escaping from it.
This is how history works.
What shall we say then?
What will the colonels, the captains, the corporals say?
What will they say--
of those terrible beatings,
the brutality,
of houses blown up?
And most of all, the humiliation.
That humiliation:
Of patients forced to wipe off the writing on the walls.
Of old men forced to take down a flag
from an electric pole,
who were electrocuted, or fell
and broke their legs.
Of the old water carrier

whom soldiers ordered off his donkey
and rode on his back, just for fun.

* * *

We turned a deaf ear, we turned a deaf heart,
mean, arrogant, and dumb.

Who do we think we are?

Who gave us the right
to be so deaf, so dumb?

Ignoring the obvious: They are as human
as we are, as we are.

At least as we used to be,
only forty one years ago.

No less diligent, no less smart
as sensitive, as full of hope.

They love their wives and children
as we do, no less.

And our children now shoot theirs
with lead, plastic bullets, and gas.

The Palestinians' State will come to pass.
It will.

Not a poet wrote this.

History will.

And seasons will come and seasons will go
and life goes on as we very well know:
weddings and birth and death all the same,
but just the shame of it. The shame.

Dalia Rabikovitch
MOTHERHOOD

A mother strolls
with a dead child in the womb
yet to be born
when the term ends, the stillborn comes forth

head first, the body next,
finally the buttocks.

This child is an exact saint
he was not created before his creator
his grave will be tiny
on the cemetery's outskirts
a miniature memorial day
a puny stone marker
constituting the entire record of this stillborn
who was killed
lying in the womb
in January 1988 in certain political circumstances
under security measures.

Translated by Naseer Aruri

Gilgi Hauser

PASSOVER. TEL AVIV. 1988

This spring
 is burning tires.
Blossom scent
 is blood oranges.
Matzah crumbs
 are splayed bullets.
Songs of triumph
 are cries of terror.
The Israelite sight of Canaan
 is the heavy metal in Gaza.
The taste of honey
 is the bitter herb of today.

And I?

I at my window of reality
see the flicker of lights go green
the convoy of BMWs, occupying
this promised land
where the latest video or laser disk
is a cause.

Alone with my spirit and Siamese cat,
I breathe the pollution of politics,
drink bottled water from the supermarket,
and ask my four questions--

Where are we?
Why is this year different?
What have we done?
Who will hear a silent prayer
in a land created for the persecuted
in a land creating persecution?

Moses' land of milk and honey
is an El Al poster.
The Law of Return
is a road to nowhere.
This ritual of Passover
is a celebration of bondage.

Whispers of the wind
be a dream master tonight and
paint pictures of conscience on
the pillows of tomorrow.
Let my people go home to themselves
to review their vision
on the screens of truth.
Let each dig out his own humanity
from the rubble of rhetoric--
so the collective will cease digging trenches.

If we cannot hear ourselves
how can we listen to those just
beginning their Exodus?

(New Outlook, May 1988)

Carmen Shalev
COLD

This country leaves me cold.
It curdles the blood in my veins
with its heated passions
and then leaves me cold
numb
dull
senseless to it all

Every morning at dawn
reality taps on my window pane
relentlessly
insistent
without reprieve.

My soul as aching from the pain
that tears my gut asunder,
wreaking havoc in my heart

Like a monstrous bullet
exploding (aaiye...e...e...)
spraying shards of burning metal
all where and everywhere inside...
consuming me with its hideous stupidity
eating me up from within

Till nothing's left but a shell
toughened

beaten
weathered to insensibility,
fighting the brutal elements
just to stay in one piece.
pound all around while the drums of battle
and the warriors brandish their weapons
whooping in circle of mad dance
(as the stones fly above)
heroes of phallic fantasy
doomed to their death.

NOSTALGIA

Dan Almagor

Everyone loves nostalgia, and I'm no different.
I've been dabbling in it for years,
Yeaming for the good old distant days,
The days of my childhood,
When I was a twelve-year-old Palestinian under (British)
occupation.
I may be a sentimentalist
But to this day, this very day
I remember those times vividly and proudly:
The leaflets, the curfew, the underground.
The arrests, the demonstrations.
The soldiers with their red berets.
The daubed slogans on the wall, the flag.
"A Jewish state" "A Jewish state." -.
The British foreign minister on the radio
"There is no Jewish nation, nobody to conduct talks with."
The High Commissioner in the morning paper-
"Disturbances...order has been restored..."
Damp posters on the wall,
Executions...clandestine broadcasts,

That emotion-packed moment when the votes were counted.
On that Friday afternoon
In Herzl Street in Rehovot outside Wolf's electrical store,
Where he'd put up a loudspeaker
And I stood there, 12 years old and heard the voice say
"Therefore we have assembled here to proclaim statehood"
You don't forget moments like those.
When the fortieth anniversary came around
We thought of putting on a grand spectacle
To bring those days alive again
For those who still remember and for those who are too
young to have been there.
And when the stone throwing started
And the posters hastily stuck on walls,
And the demonstrations and the arrests,
And the barricades and the makeshift weapons,
I thought perhaps some impresario with flair and imagination
Was staging it all as an exercise in nostalgia
For our fortieth anniversary.



GENESIS AND EXODUS

in the Poetry of Amal Dunqul

The Arabs and Zionists have been pitted against each other since the colonization of Palestine, which culminated in appropriating its land and declaring it a "Jewish" state, while expelling, exterminating or subjugating its indigenous Arab population. Despite the hostility, Arab writers have been at pains to distinguish between Zionism as a political, racist ideology and Judaism as a scriptural religion and spiritual path. The ordinary Arab may use "Jewish" and "Zionist" interchangeably, but it is not for lack of distinctions usually made by Arab intellectuals. It is more often due to the dangerous obliteration of such differences in the discourse of Israeli spokesmen, for whom all Jews are and should unquestionably be Zionists -- so much so that Jews who have opposed or questioned Zionism, such as Noam Chomsky, to name an outstanding figure, have been called "anti-Semites," or "self-hating Jews," etc.

It is not surprising that with such deliberate blurring, people all over the world have come to confuse the two: the spiritual legacy of a religious community with the political agenda of a settler-colonial state. That distinction, however, has been insisted upon by Arab writers and Arab poets, whose resentment of Zionism, and their uncompromising opposition to Zionist expansion and the subjugation of the Arab people, have not prevented them from identifying with humanity's and spiritual cultural heritage, including that of the Jews.

Even a cursory reading of modern Arabic poetry will strike the

reader by its inclusion of episodes from the *Old Testament*, and with its intertextual references to such books as *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Lamentations*, *Job*, *Jonah*, etc. The Palestinian poets Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qasim are well-known for the incorporation of Biblical imagery in their poetry, but they are by no means the only ones. Several Egyptian poets have elaborated on themes from the *Old Testament*--among them Amal Dunqul (1940-1983) and more recently Muhammad Sulaiman.

The narratives of the *Old Testament* are of course not exclusively Jewish. They are shared by Christians and Moslems alike (albeit with differences in modes of narration or interpretation), who see themselves as continuing the Semitic spiritual tradition and adhering to monotheistic religions. Furthermore, some of the narratives in *Genesis* hearken back to variants found in the earliest writings of Mesopotamian culture. The flood, for example, occurs in the famous Sumerian-Babylonian epic *Gilgamesh*--which is the earliest extant literary text in the history of the human race.

The modern Egyptian poet Amal Dunqul integrated a number of mythic, legendary and sacred motifs in his poetry. For example, he used Arabian legendary history as the poetic frame of reference to comment on present-day events and the humiliating deals to be made with the enemy, in his well-known, virtually prophetic poem entitled "*Do Not Make Peace*" (*La Tusalih*), written before Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, in intuitive anticipation of the compromising settlement made with the Zionist state. While it is not surprising to find poets calling on their own history to sensitize and mobilize the readers, it is somewhat unusual to find the sacred texts of Others, with their specific styles and headings, to express the tensions and aspirations of the collective Self. Dunqul succeeded in poetically assimilating the texts associated with Judaism while still maintaining a healthy distance from Zionism.

Amal Dunqul was born in Upper Egypt, and like many writers known as the Generation of the Sixties, migrated to Cairo from the countryside. He came to be known as *the vagabond poet*. He moved between cheap hotels and apartments, sharing with his artistic mates not only meager meals, but also taking turns wearing the only outfit

they had for social and literary gatherings!¹ Not surprisingly, Amal Dunqul became a legend in his own lifetime. He combined the traits of the *poète maudit* with the passionate flare of the native son (*ibn al-balad*); he was undomesticated but loving, irreverent but honest, uncompromising but humane.

Amal Dunqul wrote six collections of poetry, apart from dispersed poems which were collected in his Complete Works. From his first collection, *Weeping Before Zarqa' al-Yamama* (1969), to his last collection, published posthumously, *Papers of Room 8* (1983), his gift for simplicity and outspokenness made him the darling of rebellious youth and the *bête noire* of the Establishment.²

The two poems translated here, "The Book of Genesis" and "The Book of Exodus" are from Dunqul's collection *The Coming Testament* (1975). In her fascinating biography of Dunqul and the account of their unconventional relationship entitled *The Southerner* (1985), Abla al-Roueni, drama critic, journalist and the poet's widow deems this collection his best.³ Significant as these poems are, they have not before been translated into English, although some of his poems have been co-translated into English by the Palestinian poet Sharif Elmusa and the Canadian poet Thomas Ezzy.⁴ His poems have also been translated into German, Spanish, Turkish and Greek.

In 1983, at the age of 43, Dunqul died tragically of cancer complications after a long agony, as depicted in his last collection *Papers of Room 8*, named after the room he occupied in the terminal cases ward in a Cairo hospital. In a documentary film made about him, the talented director Atiyyat al-Abnoudi captures a full portrait of the artist, including his rural roots and his poetic persona. A few of his poems were set to music by the young Egyptian operatic composer Sharif Muhiyy al-Din and sung by the Egyptian soprano Nevine Allouba. The composer and singer Ahmad Khalaf has sung and set to *oud* music Dunqul's "The Book of Exodus." Dissertations, books and articles on Dunqul have been regularly coming out, including a book by the Egyptian critic and professor of literature, Sayyid al-Bahrawi, entirely devoted to an analysis of only one poem of Dunqul's poems, "The Son of Noah".⁵

Dunqul's poem, "The Book of Genesis," uses the language and

idiomatic phraseology of the first book of the *Pentateuch*, popularly known as the five books of Moses, but the poet humanizes the speaker in the poem. The act of creation fuses God with mankind, the *Old Testament* with the *New Testament*, and the sacred past with current events. God is seen in the poem -- as in a mystic mirror -- at one with His creatures, without the usual male-female hierarchy: "In the beginning I was man, woman and tree." Swarms of bees, flocks of sheep and groups of geese complete this idyllic setting and intertwine with the arboreal, zoological, human and divine -- constituting a union of the living and a unity of life.

The pastoral and primeval setting reveals not only the bliss of Being, but also the sorrow of Becoming: "I gazed in the water's depth/ I gazed / And saw my face adorned with a wreath of thorns." God is presented not as a vengeful being, but as loving and just: "I said: / Let love be on earth[...]I said: / Let justice be on earth." And yet the absence of love and justice becomes conspicuous. Son of Adam shows a perverse streak for possessiveness and tyranny. Rhetorical questions and apocalyptic scenes in the poem evoke the Biblical text as well as modern conditions. The divine wish to have reason on earth, "I said: / Let reason be on earth," has been reversed. Instead madness reigns, polluting the environment, holding on to deadly atomic weapons as if for dear life, and spreading discord. This visionary panorama of a world gone mad and of ecological disasters demonstrates once more the poet's prophetic sense of where things are heading. God, then, lets loose wind and blood -- the wind to purge the world from its "rot" and exploitation ("The rich who mint from the sweat of laborers / Adulterous coins"); the blood to purify the land by reaching down to the roots, like life-reviving rain -- as in *The Waste Land* of T. S. Eliot, the Prologue of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. God/Man identifies himself with the wretched and the hungry, with the cross and the crucified, with innocence and suffering.

The poem, "The Book of Exodus," was first entitled simply "The Song of the Petrified Cake," (which has now become the subtitle), when it appeared in *Sanabil*,⁶ the cultural monthly magazine (published in *Kafr al-Shaykh* ward, in March 1972. The poem describes the student demonstrations which took place in early 1972

in the Square of Liberation (*Maydan al-Tahrir*) in the heart of Cairo. The image of the "petrified cake" comes from the central stone monument in the Square, made up of circular pedestals, resembling a multi-layered cake. The Egyptian government closed down the magazine *Sanabil*, whose editor was the poet Muhammad Afifi Matar, after its publication of Dunqul's poem!

The title, "The Book of Exodus," was added when the poem was included in Dunqul's collection, *The Coming Testament*. Although the poem does not depend on the structure or style of the Biblical Exodus, in contradistinction to his poem "The Book of Genesis," it does borrow the pregnant term "exodus" (*khuruj*) to indicate a mass departure – that of the rebellious students – from the social norm. The departure motif is reinforced by the farewells enunciated in Chapter III of the poem, just before the massacre of the youth by the police force. Thus the nature of the departure is a march out and forward. The patriotic thrust of such an exilic move from one's community is crystallized in the unfolding of the poem.⁷

In both poems, Amal Dunqul, recalls Biblical events to the mind of the reader by the positioning of key terms and evocative language. Yet, he is able to humanize the sacred narratives and make them pertinent to the present day and actual events.

Ferial J. Ghazoul

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Footnotes

1. Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih, "Introduction," in Amal Dunqul, *Al-A'mal al-shi'riyya al-kamila* (Beirut: Dar al-Awda, 1985), p. 28.
2. For more details on the works of Dunqul, see Samia Mehrez, "Amal Dunqul," in *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century*, vol. V (New York, Continuum, 1993), pp. 190-191.
3. Abba al-Roueni, *Al-Janubi* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbouli, 1985), p. 28.
4. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, ed., *Modern Arabic Poetry: An Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 214-217.
5. Sayyid al-Bahravi, *Fi al-bahth 'an lulu'at al-mustahil* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Jadid, 1988).
6. *Sanabil*, March 1972, pp. 24-25.
7. I am grateful to Abba al-Roueni, the poet's widow, for granting me the permission to translate the two poems of Dunqul and for providing me with factual information. I am also grateful to the American poet John Verlenden for his careful reading of my translation and for his valuable comments and suggestions.





THE COMING TESTAMENT

Translated by Ferial J. Ghazoul

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Chapter I

In the beginning I was man, woman and tree
I was father, son and holy ghost
I was morning, evening and the circular fixed gaze
My throne was stones on the banks of river
Sheep grazed
Bees buzzed around blossoms
Geese floated in silence lake
And life throbbed like a distant mill
When I saw:
That all I see can't save the heart from boredom
(Cockfights were my one entertainment
In my lonely seat among entangled branches)

Chapter II

I said to myself:
If I go down to the water and wash, I will split
(If I split, I will double...and I smiled)
After I bathed
From lips' heat
Blossoms wove themselves into a shawl with which

I wrapped my shivering body
(My throne floating like an ark)
A sparrow fluttered to my head
And, alighting, shook off its dew
I gazed in the water's depth
I gazed
And saw my face adorned with a thorn-wreath

Chapter III

I said:
Let love be on earth, and it was not
I said:
Let river dissolve into ocean
Ocean into drought
Drought into fertility
Sprouting bread to sustain hungry hearts
Grass for the earth's cattle
Shade for exiles in sorrow's desert
I saw the son of Adam
Raising his fences around God's personal farm
Shopping for border guards
Selling bread and water to his brethren
Milking lean cows

I said:
Let love be on earth, and it was not
Love was now possessed
By those who could afford the price
And God saw this was not good

I said:
Let justice be on earth
An eye for an eye
A tooth for a tooth

I said:
Does the wolf devour the wolf?
The goat devour the goat?
Don't brandish the sword against the necks of these two:

The child or the old man
And I came to see the son of Adam
Slaughtering the son of Adam
Setting cities ablaze
Planting his dagger in the bellies of pregnant women
Giving his children's fingers as fodder to horses
Decorating victory banquet with rosettes of severed lips
Justice become death
The gun its measure
Its children crucified in public squares and city street corners

I said:

Let justice be on earth
But it was not
Justice was now possessed
By figures seated on thrones of skulls
With shrouds for mantles
And God saw this was not good

I said:

Let reason be on earth
With its measured voice

I said:

Do birds build nests in a snake's mouth?
Do worms live in fiery flames?
Does the owl paint its eye-lashes black with *kohl*?
Is salt strewn when wheat is intended
In the run of time's wheel?
I saw the son of Adam go mad:
Uprooting tall trees
Spitting in wells
Spilling oil on the face river's face
Living in a house while storing a deadly bomb
Under the sill
Giving shelter to scorpions in the warmth of his ribs
Bequeathing to his descendants
His faith
His name

His shirt of strife
Reason become an exiled beggar
Stoned by brats
Arrested by border guards
His patriotic identity invalidated by governments
His name listed among those who hate their homeland

I said:

Let reason be on earth
But it was not
Reason fell apart in a spiral of exile and prison
Until it went mad
And God saw this was not good

Chapter IV

I said:

Let the wind be on earth to sweep this rot clean

I said:

Let be wind and blood
The wind uprooting the rustling of tenacious leaf
The blood reaching roots to purify and fertilize
Ascending the stalk
Entangled leaves
Hanging fruit
That they be pressed into wine
Trilling in jugs

I said:

Let the blood turn into a river of honey
Flowing through the gardens of Eden
Earth is beauty
Embellished by the poor
For them
It perfumes itself
They give it love
It gives them progeny and pride

I said:

The rich shall not dwell in it

The rich who mint from the sweat of laborers
Adulterous coins
Crown jewels
Ivory earrings
And hypocritic rosaries
For I am the forebear of the poor who live apart
Dying and counting on me for solace

I said:

Let the earth be for them and for me
(As I am one of them)
When I take off my heavenly garments
I am sanctified
In hunger's scream on a rude bed

Chapter V

I gazed at the stones and the spring
I saw my face in hunger's contours
I gazed at my forehead upside-down
I saw myself:
The cross and the crucified
I screamed
Emerging from the womb of bliss
I screamed
Pleading innocent
My being: My gallows
My umbilical cord: Its ruptured coil

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

(The Song of the Petrified Cake)

Chapter I

O ye standing on the edge of the massacre
Level your weapons
Death fell
The heart burst like a rosary
And blood flowed over the shawl
The houses are tombs
The prison-cells are tombs
The horizons are tombs
So raise your weapons
And follow me
I am the remorse of tomorrow and yesterday
My emblem: Two bones and a skull
My slogan: The morning

Chapter II

The tired clock struck
His good mother raised her eyes
(The muzzles of guns pushed him into the vehicle)
The tired clock struck
She got up and arranged his study
(A hand slapped him
God's hand led him into temptation)
The tired clock struck
His mother sat and mended his socks
(The interrogator's eyes pricked at him
Until his skin broke out in blood and answers)
The tired clock struck
The tired clock struck

Chapter III

When you descend on people's square
Don't give them your "Peace be with you"

Right now they are carving up your little ones on platters
Having set fire to the nest
The straw and the seed
Tomorrow they'll slaughter you
Looking for treasure in your gizzard
And tomorrow
Millennial cities turn into cities of tents
Cities climbing the looming guillotine's ladder

Chapter IV

The cruel clock struck
They stood in the sullen public squares
And circled the steps of the monument
Like trees ablaze
Among their tangled delicate foliage the wind blasted
Moaning "My country, My country"
(My distant country)
The cruel clock struck
"Look" cried a belle
Lounging in a limousine with foreign plates
The second muttered:
"They will disband when the cold sets in
and when fatigue descends"
The cruel clock struck
In a cafe
A radio was broadcasting patchwork speeches
On riot-mongers
As they circled
Flaming on the petrified cake around the monument:
A candlestick of anger glowing at night
Voices flushing out whatever gloom remained
Chanting for the birthnight of a new Egypt

Chapter V

Remember me
The headlines in treacherous newspapers

Smear me
Colored me
For I have been colorless since the defeat
(Except for the color of loss)
Before which I used to read the face of the sand
(Sand become like hard currency
Sand turned into mats
Beneath the feet of the Defense Army)
So remember me
As you would a smuggler
A sentimental singer
A colonel's cap
Or New Year's decoration
Remember me
When the eye-witnesses
When the minutes of Parliament
When the list of declared accusations have forgotten me
Farewell
And farewell

Chapter VI

The clock struck five
Soldiers appeared:
A circle of shields and helmets
Here they come closer little by little
They come from every all direction
The chanters on the petrified cake
Ebbing and flowing like a throbbing of a heart
Inflaming throats
Warming themselves against the cold and gloom
Chanting hymns to approaching guards
Intertwining their tender wretched hands
Forming a fence against bullets
Bullets
Bullets
Ah

They chant:
"We shall redeem you O Egypt
We shall redeem..."
A silenced throat collapses
With it your name O Egypt collapses on the ground
Nothing remains but crushed body and screams
On the gloomy square
The clock struck five
It struck five
It struck five
Your water was scattered O River
When you reached your outlet
The houses are tombs
The prison-cells are tombs
The horizons are tombs
So raise the weapons
Raise
The weapons

Amal Dunqul



POSITIVE ALIENATION

A Conversation with Halim Barakat

You are an Arab intellectual who lives abroad. How does this exile affect your work, both as a professor of sociology and as a novelist?

I've spent most of the last twenty-five years in the U.S., but I return to the Arab world at least once a year. I do consider my being an Arab intellectual who lives in the United States a form of self-exile. I also believe there is a close relationship between exile and creativity; that is, being part of the Arab world, but not immersed in it. This has the advantage of not being preoccupied and overwhelmed with local events. When I lived in the Arab world, in Beirut for example, I was preoccupied with events in Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. But once outside that region, I began to develop an interest in the Arab world as a whole. But to return to the issue of creativity and exile, I think there is a relationship between the two because one is not too close to the center of power where there is a great deal of direct and indirect pressures on the person to conform. Living in the U.S. has enhanced my sociological thinking and analysis of the Arab world; but as a novelist, I feel something is lacking. What concerns me is that it's not enough to be knowledgeable about events; one must keep in touch with the people, and that is why

the main purpose of my yearly trips home is not to meet with intellectuals or the elites in power, but to mix with ordinary people as much as possible.

So living abroad has another advantage; that is, you avoid the sort of "pressures" an Arab intellectual faces who chooses to remain.

Yes, there's a heavy price for being critical. You can be silenced; you can be co-opted; or you may have to practice self-censorship. Here in the U.S. I have the freedom to reflect, to think critically about the Arab world without threats and inducements or other difficulties in a society we all know to lack civil liberties. By living in the West, however, I find that I face another kind of problem. When Western intellectuals or orientalist write about the Arab world, they sometimes misunderstand the Arabs.

In your book The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State (UCP 1993), you envision a democratic future for the Arab world, and base this vision on the Arab will for change. What makes you confident that this will happen?

Arabs have constantly defined their identity in cultural terms and emphasized language, tradition and religion. There is some lack of tolerance of diversity. The question now is how Arabs can redefine their identity, that is, how to continue to define it in cultural terms as well as economic and political terms. What we need is an exchange of benefits between Arab countries. What we have now is an exchange of ideas without an exchange of benefits. Politically also, Arabs have tended to be fragmented, country against country, political regime against political regime, etc. and this has weakened the Arabs. The Arab world should not be seen as a convention of states that are in conflict with one another. Even if we're not ready for unity, there must be an improvement in relations between the

governments. Until this happens, we cannot hope for true independence. In cultural terms, we should have unity through diversity, not suppress diversity or be scared of it. On the contrary, diversity must be seen as a source of enrichment; it is necessary to democracy. And I don't mean just political democracy, but democracy on the level of the family, school, and other social institutions. Our goals may sound farfetched for the Arabs, but these are goals, dreams which Arabs can struggle for and achieve. Being realistic does not mean that one should stop having dreams and aspirations for his or her own people.

Your faith in a state of struggle which leads to change seems to contradict the popular view in the West that Arabs are fatalists.

Yes I believe in the power of a dynamic internal struggle in the Arab world. Such a state of struggle, which has taken the form of nationalism, religious revivalism, or cultural forms in other times can once again enable Arabs to overcome their alienation and dissatisfaction with present conditions. The Israelis, particularly the Zionists, have always wondered why the Arabs whom they have defeated several times, have not given up. But Arabs do not give up because they do not accept present conditions. And although the Palestinians, for example, are often accused of using violence, their hostility comes about as a result of alienation, of trying to overcome that alienation and take control of their lives, not because they are a violent people.

Even so, it's difficult to justify the view that violence is somehow an acceptable part of the process.

One of my main concerns at the present time is trying to find a peaceful solution to Arab problems. For example, the Palestinians presently want democracy; they want to have input on their leadership and upon what kind of state they will have.

And they must become part of the process of finding solutions; that is how trust comes about.

In order to achieve peace, there must be a climate of trust. How can this happen in the Arab world as a whole when many Arab countries are ruled by strongmen or dictators who have little interest in democratic principles?

I'm still looking for an answer. Rulers must realize that their methods have not worked; on the contrary, they have weakened the Arab world.

Don't the radical changes that you call for in the Arab world require a revolution? As I recall, in the aforementioned book, you actually refer to yourself as a "revolutionary." You don't seem like a revolutionary in the classic sense.

No, I have never practiced any form of violence. I think when we speak of "revolutionary" or "radical" change, we mean the restructuring of the society in all ways, to create a new order in the Arab world. Revolution is the means, but who will bring it about? Not the political elite, the economic elite, nor the intellectuals on their own, but the Arab people who are very alienated by existing conditions, since affiliations like labor unions and political parties are prohibited. Thus some have resorted to religion, hence Islamic fundamentalism, but I don't think that is the answer. For now, I'm afraid that the Arab world will continue to suffer from alienation and existing problems, and remain in a state of turmoil.

Let us turn now to your fiction where you have often employed the theme of alienation and rebellion. Your work often concentrates on a microcosm of Arab society, such as the village, and how it deals with tradition and transformation. Thus you explore tensions between Islam and the secular, as well as social struggles such as women's rights. Indeed the

protagonist of your most recent novel is a woman who resists the traditional role she is expected to assume, that of wife and mother. Would you tell us more about your interests as a novelist?

Shifting to the novel is not really shifting to another activity for me since I find social analysis and writing fiction complimentary activities. For example, I research the social and individual behavior of a setting, but I stop there. A novel should not be a sociological treatise, but should treat the human existential experience. In fact I studied sociology to enhance my understanding of the society which my fiction deals with. For example, one of my earlier novels, *Days of Dust* (which has a different title in Arabic) is about the June war of 67. On one hand it's a documentary, and on the other, it is about the individual experiences of people who experience the war day by day. The novel I have just finished is about a rebellious young woman in a village setting. This is actually my first novel about the village although I have already written an autobiographical novel entitled *The Crane*. I'm very comfortable with the village setting because that's where I spent my childhood.

Is there any relationship between The Crane and the present novel?

Yes, in fact the present novel is the novel I intended to write before *The Crane*. I wrote my autobiography because I felt I needed to write about my own experience before I wrote about the experience of another villager. In any case, the village in both novels is the village of my childhood even though I give it a fictitious name in the girl's story.

Was there such a girl in the village of your childhood as well?

Yes, she and other characters are based upon people I knew,

but imagination has also played a role.

It's interesting to know that you did not entirely invent the intelligent, free-thinking protagonist, a protagonist who could inspire today's Arab women. While Arab women writers have often addressed themselves to women's rights, it's encouraging to see that an Arab man such as yourself is similarly concerned. Of course, your concern is not only with women's rights, but with the rights of both sexes to resist submitting to traditional roles and patterns if they wish.

Yes, in my novel a valiant woman is engaged in her own liberation, but that liberation is also society's. Ironically, the resistance to change comes not from her father, but from her mother. In fact, the mother plays a much more active role in trying to undermine her daughter's liberation. The mother, out of love or concern, expects her daughter to perpetuate tradition even though she, herself, is not satisfied with her own condition, her marriage for example, yet she presses her daughter to conform.

The mother's behavior defies the Western stereotype that it's the Arab man who is to blame for the "imprisonment" of women.

Right. Women can also be very traditional and scared of change. They think change may make them vulnerable. While resistance to women's liberation comes from men because they have the privileges, traditional women also resist change because they fear what the consequences will be. For them to embrace change requires a whole new outlook. They must see that the security of their daughters comes less from the "right" marriage than from education and career. Right now such considerations are secondary to marrying the daughter to someone well-to-do, and that is as true for traditional women from privileged backgrounds as those from the village.

Speaking of "change," what strategies do you use to depict conflicts between traditional and modern ways of life in your novel?

I emphasize the relationship between myth and reality in depicting the existential experience. That includes experimenting with different kinds of language such as colloquial and poetic Arabic. For example, I intend a parallel between the role of women in traditional society and in modern society. So naturally, there's going to be a new language emerging from existing tensions.

A kind of rebirth in keeping with the mythic pattern.

That's right.

Would you give me an example of the sort of linguistic change you're referring to?

I use a form of narration based on the five thousand year old legend of Innana in the mythologies of Sumer in Mesopotamia, present day Iraq. Like *The Arabian Nights*, which uses a frame story which contains a story within a story and so on, the style of the Sumerian myths is distinctive. In addition to these techniques, I bring my knowledge of modern existential literature. So there is obviously an emphasis upon imagery and symbolism. Such elements may be expressed formally or colloquially. You know, the language of Arabic literature has been traditionally divorced from that of the people about whom we write. I try to make the language of the writer as close as possible to the language of the people. I don't mean this just in terms of conversations, but symbolically and structurally.

Your approach suggests that you want to reach the widest audience possible; do you also envision a unified Arab readership?

Yes, my approach to writing is similar to my approach to politics; that is, I address myself to the Arab world as a whole. I believe that Arab writers should write to Arabs in general not just their own people. The intellectual debate should be among all Arabs whether they're Egyptians, Syrians, or Lebanese.

Thus the writer can influence Arab unity?

Yes, I think Arab writers see their role as an active one in encouraging change in the Arab world. Writers may be marginalized, but they do not accept their marginality.

*Does your present novel depict the sort of changes
or remedies you'd like to see happen in society?*

Yes, the novel portrays a young woman who not only seeks self-knowledge and independence, but who is also involved in social reform, for example, her effort to save the village river. Saving the river is not so much saving the environment, but saving the purity that the river represents before the advance of civilization, buildings, coffee houses, etc. At the end of the novel, a flood removes all the things like the coffee houses which polluted the river; the river asserts its desire to save itself, and so the flood destroys what has developed in the name of modernity.

Which is decadent modernity.

Yes, in order to regain the purity of village life, the rage of the river reacts to a consumer, consuming decay of life. While Arab writers have tended to emphasize political and economic change, it's now important to expand that emphasis to include social and cultural change. Of course we know that such change depends upon a basic reform of society. Here lies the dilemma, how do you do this and keep the individual and the group at the center?

Even though you do not want to return to the past, there are obviously things about "old ways" characteristic of village life that appeal to you. What are some of those qualities?

Usually nostalgic recollections of village life emphasize warm relationships between members of the community and a closeness to nature. Today it is a paradise lost or on its way to extinction, which means that while a writer, for example, works for change, he must also reflect upon the quality of that change.

The possibility of things changing, but for the worse?

Certainly Arab intellectuals have been highly interested in notions of authenticity, which implies that regardless of one's fascination with the West, you don't want to imitate the West. Change does not mean imitating the West. One must be open-minded, but reflect critically, carefully. Authenticity can mean going back to traditions, religious, etc., but to do so undermines freedom and will not lead to social justice.

If Arab nations could unite, their unity might seem emblematic of the community of village life.

They must seek harmony and yet preserve their diversity.

Speaking of goals for the future, what sort of plans do you have for future projects?

Many of my friends suggest that I confine myself to writing novels, and indeed, I have plans for other novels. But in the immediate future, I intend to write a book on the genre of the Arab novel, and one on alienation and change in Arab society. At the moment, I'm writing an essay on democracy (in the Arab world) and on related notions of social justice. I'm responding to the argument that democracy is more about capitalism than social justice. So I ask the question of whether a balance

between justice and freedom can be achieved in the Arab world.

I wonder. . . .

If this is an impossible task? I don't believe it is, but it is a challenging task.

Do you think that Islamic fundamentalism is, in part, a reaction to social injustice?

Yes, the religious movement in Lebanon, for example, called itself the equivalent of the English phrase "the movement of the deprived." But the significant element is that the socialist nationalist movements have failed to solve problems and build new orders. As I have mentioned earlier, some states and their rulers have destroyed the civil society, so people were forced, in a sense, to seek refuge in religion.

Can Islamic fundamentalists and those who support democracy in the Middle East be reconciled?

While religion will always be a force to satisfy humanity's spiritual need, when it becomes a political movement, aiming at establishing or imposing a state, then I think it will be hard to reconcile secular and religious forces because a religious state cannot be a democratic state.

In conclusion, what sort of advice would you give to young Arabs about the world they are going to inherit; in particular, what would you say to those who feel alienated?

One of the most important messages I would give the young is in regards to how to handle their alienation. I see them as having three choices: to withdraw or to comply, and keep your thoughts to yourself, or to rebel against society and to try and change things. My view of alienation is positive in the sense

that one shouldn't try to escape or submit, but to resist, to change the reality--that's the most responsible way. To choose the final alternative is challenging, since one must cope with alienation and transcend it.

So young Arabs should believe that it is worth struggling to change things.

Yes, through the struggle they will transcend their alienation.

And one is not just rebelling, but rebelling responsibly. Your words recall existentialist sentiments, and how the individual's struggle against history and society gives meaning to one's existence and so defeats despair. What about giving also some advice to young Arab writers?

They should experiment with new forms of expression, but they should also remember that the choice of forms is the result of a deeper understanding of reality. I warn against using gimmicks. Earlier in the interview, I said that writing is not about ideas but about the human existential experience; thus, experiments in form should come as a result of grasping the meaning of a given reality. Experimenting with forms should emerge from a new vision. . . .

That new vision, for those who would like to try, is to be part of a new leadership for a new Arab world.

Right.

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